

The Leninist Strategy of Party Building

The Debate
on Guerrilla Warfare
in Latin America

Joseph Hansen

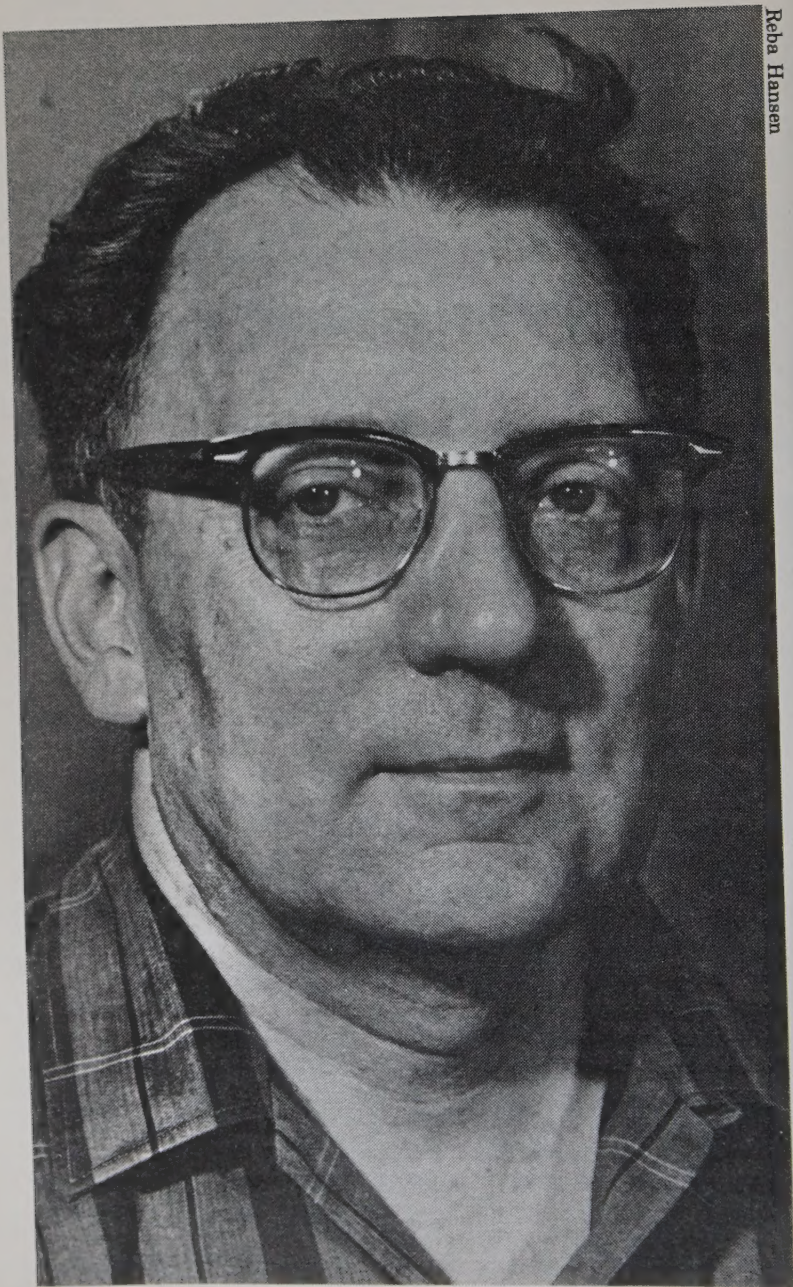


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Reba Hansen



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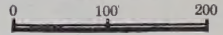
Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Maps | 6 |
| Introduction | 9 |
| Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America | 31 |
| Report on the 1969 World Congress of the Fourth International | 56 |
| A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America | 79 |
| In Defense of the Leninist Strategy of Party Building | 100 |
| I. In Reply to Comrade Maitan | 102 |
| II. In Reply to Comrades Germain and Knoeller | 153 |
| Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet | |
| I. Two Orientations | 208 |
| II. The Lesson of Bolivia | 226 |
| III. The Lesson of Argentina | 254 |
| IV. The Crisis in the Fourth International | 312 |
| The Underlying Differences in Method | |
| I. The Origin of the Dispute | 333 |
| II. Comrade Germain's Counterattack | 364 |
| III. The Gap Between Theory and Practice | 398 |
| Armed Struggle in Latin America | 434 |
| Report on the 1974 World Congress of the Fourth International | 442 |
| Appendix I: Resolution on Latin America | 464 |
| Appendix II: Self-Criticism on Latin America, by the Steering Committee of the International Majority Tendency | 485 |
| Appendix III: The Meaning of the IMT Self-Criticism on Latin America, by Jack Barnes | 507 |
| Notes | 534 |
| Index | 597 |



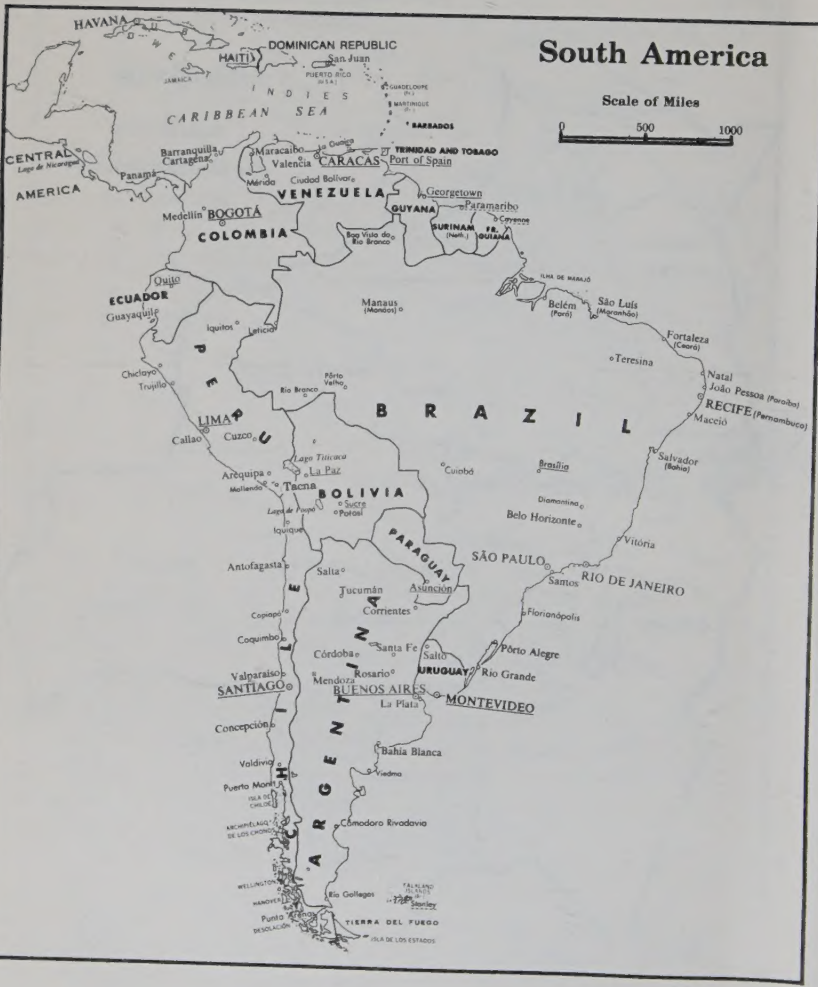
Bolivia

Scale of Miles



South America

Scale of Miles



Introduction

Joseph Hansen was an active participant in the revolutionary Marxist movement for forty-five years. Collected in this volume are his contributions to a debate over the strategy and tactics of the struggle for socialism that took place over a ten-year period, from 1968 to 1978, within the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution founded by Leon Trotsky. The focus of the debate was Latin America. The question in dispute concerned the role of guerrilla warfare, or, more broadly, of armed actions by relatively small groups of revolutionists, as a means of assembling the forces necessary to defeat foreign imperialist domination, overturn domestic capitalism, and begin the construction of a socialist society.

Plainly, as the record of the last ten years shows, this was not a question of interest only to the Trotskyist movement. There is hardly a country in Latin America where at some time in the 1960s or 1970s small groups of devoted and idealistic rebels did not take to the hills to wage an armed struggle against an oppressive regime. The inspiration for this course came from many sources—in some cases going back to guerrilla campaigns against Spanish rule in the last century. The most immediate impulse, of course, came from the victory of the Cuban revolution in 1959, in which guerrilla warfare, beginning with a relative handful, had played a dramatic part.

In the wake of the overturn of capitalism by workers in Cuba under the leadership of Fidel Castro's team, there were innumerable attempts to emulate the Cuban experience on the Latin American mainland—most often mechanically and without much appreciation of the role of mass forces involved in Cuba's cities in assuring the victory of the Sierra Maestra guerrillas over Batista, let alone in the revolutionary process afterward that led to the establishment of the first workers' state in the Western Hemisphere.

By the mid-1960s, guerrilla fronts in imitation of the Cuban example had been launched—and for the most part defeated—in Guatemala, Venezuela, Colombia, and Peru. Soon to move into prominence were the “urban guerrillas” of Uruguay and Argentina. And in 1967 the most spectacular guerrilla campaign of all came to an end, when Che Guevara, the legendary hero of the Cuban victory, was tracked down, captured, and murdered in a joint effort by the Bolivian army and the American CIA.

Nor was it only in Latin America that fighters for revolutionary social change decided to adopt the use of guerrilla warfare or small armed actions as their strategy. This approach has a long history in the struggles of oppressed nations in many parts of the world. Within the workers’ movement it is associated with the anarchist tradition descending from Bakunin in the last century. In Western Europe, it appears in the actions of the Irish Republican Army, the Basque nationalists, the Spanish anarchists, the Italian Red Brigades; in the Middle East, in the Palestinian and Kurdish movements; and in many countries of Africa and Asia.

To these examples must be added the widespread experimentation with what became known as minority violence among the radicalized youth in many countries in the period following the massive May-June 1968 student and worker strikes and demonstrations in France. This development among the European, American, and Japanese youth was an important factor in the dispute inside the Fourth International because in the late 1960s it was from this new generation of rebel youth that the Fourth International gained its first significant levy of recruits, after the long years of cold-war reaction.

The problem for Marxists, which in the late 1960s confronted the Fourth International most immediately in Latin America, was how to make a political approach to the new generation of revolutionists inspired by the Cuban revolution while at the same time not adapting to many of the ultraleft or other petty-bourgeois conceptions that permeated this milieu. At its core, this problem hinged on keeping in clear view the centrality of the industrial working class and the urban masses as the main force along whose line of march lay a socialist victory. Flowing from this orientation, it was necessary to build a disciplined, centralized, and genuinely mass workers’ party with a Marxist program to lead the fight for socialism, including to organize and lead the battles of the peasant masses and the rural agricultural workers. This approach was summed up by Joseph Hansen as the Leninist strategy of party building.

Lenin and Trotsky, of course, were no pacifists. The Bolshevik tradition does not reject the use of armed struggle in defense of the interests of the oppressed against the violence of the exploiting class. Trotsky, after all, was the organizer of the October 1917 Petrograd insurrection and the founder of the Soviet Red Army whose task was the defense of the Bolshevik revolution. Nor does Leninism reject the use of the particular tactic of guerrilla warfare, provided only that it be subordinate to the strategy of winning the masses through the construction of a combat party and that it advance the workers' self-confidence, class consciousness, and readiness for sacrifice. That is, the use of guerrilla warfare should not be the action of a small group of individuals in place of, or in an attempt to spark, a mass struggle.

Inasmuch as these basic positions had been accepted by the Marxist movement for sixty or seventy years, how did it come about that such a sharp debate would erupt among Marxists in the late 1960s over these questions, and why did the dispute last for so many years? One answer to this is that the dispute in the Fourth International over guerrilla warfare was not contrived. The questions under debate were and remain very real issues in the class struggle, in Latin America and elsewhere. And they were very much on the minds of the thousands of young people who joined the International in the late 1960s.

Their heroes had been Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, and, for many, the Asian Stalinist guerrilla leaders such as Ho Chi Minh and Mao Tse-tung. These youth were drawn to Trotskyism by its revolutionary program and defense of workers' democracy. But they were nevertheless somewhat skeptical of a Trotskyist movement that was organizationally relatively small, that did not hold state power anywhere. Most did not come from the working class and remained on some level dubious about the potential power and the revolutionary capacity of the workers. They inclined to the concept that the Trotskyist program must be proven anew. They needed to be convinced that there was not some missing ingredient in the "old Trotskyism" that had been discovered and applied by Castro, Mao, Ho, and others who, whatever their faults, had come to head powerful governments.

A second cause for the length and intensity of the faction fight in the Fourth International was more subjective. It concerned the differences among the Trotskyist organizations that existed when the growth of the 1960s began, the unevenness with which newly recruited youth were educated, and how they were brought into the leadership of the national sections and into the world

leadership bodies of the International. An important contributing factor to this unevenness was the effect of a ten-year split in the Fourth International that had been healed only in 1963.

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The origins of the Fourth International lie in the political bloc formed between Lenin and Trotsky in 1922-23 to fight the rise of the Stalin bureaucracy in Russia. Lenin died in the early stages of that fight, which was carried on by Trotsky through the organization of the Left Opposition in the Russian Communist Party and in the Communist International.

From these beginnings it was quite natural that the "Trotskyists," as the fighters for Leninism came to be called, had their largest and most experienced group of cadres in the Soviet Union—thousands of revolutionary workers who had participated in the Russian underground in tsarist times, led the insurrection in October 1917, helped to organize the revolutionary workers' government, and fought in the civil war. The Trotskyist forces outside the Soviet Union in the late 1920s were only small groups. (In part this was because the issues in the Russian fight were not yet clear enough for masses of Communist workers to choose to support a minority struggling to change the policies of the party and government still identified with the October revolution. In part the weakness of the Trotskyist movement was a result of the general social conservatism of the 1920s, based on the stabilization of the world capitalist system after World War I. This provided fertile ground for the growth and consolidation of the Stalin bureaucracy at the expense of its proletarian opposition.)

By 1938, when the Fourth International was formally founded, the Russian section, under the blows of the Stalinist repression, for all practical purposes no longer existed. The sections in the rest of the world had grown since the late 1920s, but none was larger than a few thousand members. In 1939 the Second World War began.

The leadership of the Trotskyist movement in continental Europe was decimated by the war. Pantelis Pouliopoulos, Léon Lesoil, Marcel Hic, Victor Widelin, Abram Léon, and many lesser-known figures were killed by the Nazis. This blow to leadership continuity had to be overcome at the war's end. This process actually began in the underground before the defeat of Hitler Germany. A provisional European Secretariat was established at

an underground conference in France in February 1944. Then, in March 1946, the first postwar gathering of the Fourth International took place: an international preconference in Paris, where the international leadership bodies were reestablished. At this meeting a new International Executive Committee (IEC) was elected, which in turn elected the smaller, day-to-day administrative committee for the International, the International Secretariat.

The central figure in this postwar European leadership group was Michel Pablo. Pablo was a Greek Trotskyist, then in his mid-thirties. He had been active in France since 1938. Pablo was elected secretary of the Fourth International at the 1946 preconference and was confirmed in that post by the IEC elected at the Second World Congress in 1948. The postwar leadership of the International included figures such as Pierre Frank, an early member of the French Trotskyist movement who had split from the French section in 1936 and rejoined at the end of the war; Ernest Mandel of Belgium, who had joined at the beginning of the war, and Livio Maitan of Italy, who had joined in 1948, both then in their twenties; Jock Haston and Gerry Healy of Britain, who had split from the International in the 1930s and rejoined in a reunification in Britain in 1944; and a number of the principal leaders of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, including James P. Cannon, Morris Stein, George Clarke, George Novack, and Joseph Hansen.

(The SWP had been recognized as the American section of the Fourth International at the International's Founding Congress in 1938. In 1940, however, under the threat of the imminent passage of the anticommunist Voorhis Act, which prohibited international political affiliations, the SWP was compelled to withdraw from membership in the International. Since that time the SWP has participated in the leading bodies and international gatherings of the Fourth International as an observer with only consultative and not binding vote.)

It was in the discussion in 1950-51 of the class character of the East European states that had been occupied by the Soviet army at the end of the war that Joseph Hansen first emerged as a major contributor to the program of the Fourth International. He was already at that time one of the most experienced cadres of the Trotskyist movement of the generation younger than Cannon's.

Joseph Hansen was born on June 16, 1910, in Richfield, Utah. In 1934 he joined the Communist League of America, the

Trotskyist organization of that time, as a student at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. He moved to San Francisco in 1936, where he helped to edit the *Voice of the Federation*, the newspaper of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific. He also wrote for *Labor Action*, the weekly newspaper of the California Socialist Party, edited by James P. Cannon. (This was during a period when the Trotskyists had joined the SP as a left-wing caucus, prior to the founding of the Socialist Workers Party in January 1938.)

In September 1937 Hansen went to Mexico, where for the next three years he served as secretary to Leon Trotsky. This was an indelible experience in Hansen's maturing as a revolutionary politician. Trotsky's household at Coyoacán, on the outskirts of Mexico City, served as the de facto center of the Fourth International at a time when the International Secretariat in Europe was still very weak and its leading personnel under constant threat of death from Stalin's secret police, the GPU.

In recalling this period later, Hansen wrote:

For the guards and secretaries, Coyoacán was a school of the Fourth International. . . . Trotsky utilized the entire situation, including the organization of our defense, diplomatic relations with the outside, arriving at political decisions, answering the heavy correspondence, even the articles he wrote, to pass on as much as he could to us from the tradition of the past. There appeared to be no deliberate pedagogy about this; it was just the pattern in which everything was discussed, decided, and carried out.

He could be a severe taskmaster. Life quickly became miserable for anyone around Trotsky who found it difficult to break with bohemian habits or who found it insurmountably difficult to learn preciseness, thoroughness, workmanship.¹

One period that left a particularly strong impression was the response of Trotsky and his staff to the third of Stalin's frame-up show trials, in March 1938 in Moscow, which ended in death sentences for the Old Bolshevik leaders Nikolai Bukharin and Alexei Rykov. Trotsky and his secretaries prepared daily news releases for the world press refuting the ignominious forced confessions extracted from the defendants.

Trotsky worked relentlessly—something like eighteen hours a day during the opening phase of the trial. Some of us who were younger worked still longer. We did not miss a single deadline.

Thus we functioned as a quite efficient and rather smooth, if small,

team. This was in the tradition of Trotsky's earlier staffs, a tradition handed down from one group of secretaries to another. In Russia, Trotsky's secretariat was famed. Stalin had good reason to strike special blows at its members in hope of reducing and crippling Trotsky's effectiveness. I never had the privilege of meeting the Russians. They perished in the concentration camps or from a shot in the head from a GPU pistol. But I know what they were like. They were the kind that enjoy work, do not mind working under high pressure, are independent minded, and not without skills in several fields. With such coworkers, Trotsky collaborated on an equal basis, all working together for the great common goal. And this inspired them to reach a bit beyond themselves.²

It was while he was in Mexico that Hansen, under Trotsky's influence, first became interested in the problems of revolutionary strategy in Latin America. He learned Spanish and was able to spend a good deal of time with the members of the Mexican section of the Fourth International.

After Trotsky's assassination by an agent of Stalin in August 1940, Hansen returned to New York. During World War II he worked as a merchant seaman and was a leader of the Socialist Workers Party's maritime union work. Later he joined the party's full-time staff in New York. He served as editor of the *Militant* in 1954 and again in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He was also the editor of the Marxist theoretical journal *International Socialist Review* from the Spring 1955 issue through the Summer 1959 issue.

Until the end of the 1950s, Hansen's energies were devoted mainly to American politics, but he always paid close attention to major international developments and to the political life of the Fourth International.

In 1953 sharp differences arose within the International over the attitude it should take toward the mass Stalinist parties of Europe and over the world party's organizational norms. This led to the formation of two public factions: those who supported Pablo and the International Secretariat, and the opposition to Pablo, organized after November 1953 in the International Committee faction, which was supported by the Socialist Workers Party. The two factions split in 1954.³

One result of this split was that for ten years the events of the world class struggle were discussed separately, within the international factions. This led to the solidifying of a number of differences in party-building methods, in political position, and in organizational practice.

The victory of the Cuban revolution in 1959 proved to be a key

factor in reuniting the two wings of the world Trotskyist movement. Both sides came to the defense of the Castro government against the attacks by U.S. imperialism and sought to rally support for the progressive measures carried out by the revolutionary regime and to educate as broad a layer as possible on the implications for future revolutions of the defeat given to Washington by the workers and peasants of Cuba under a leadership that had outflanked the Stalinists to the left.

Early in the Cuban revolution Joseph Hansen was assigned by the SWP leadership to follow its evolution. He analyzed each of its stages, wrote about it for the *Militant*, and sought to grasp its implications for Marxist theory. His writings on Cuba are collected in the book *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution* (Pathfinder Press, 1978), which should be read as a companion volume to his writings on the question of guerrilla warfare.

Above all, Hansen saw in the victory of Fidel Castro and the July 26 Movement the opening of a new period of revolutionary possibilities that marked the beginning of the end of the postwar stabilization of American capitalism and the ossified power of the Stalinist bureaucratic castes. Here were fresh new forces coming from outside of the Stalinist movement.

At the same time there were a number of difficult problems posed for Marxists by the Cuban victory. The Castro forces did not come from the workers' movement. They were originally radical democrats and nationalists, not Marxists. In class terms, with no pejorative intent, they were petty-bourgeois revolutionists. Based on their previous experience, Marxists had generally believed that such organizations could not substitute for a conscious Marxist party to lead the workers to make a socialist revolution. Sectarians insisted on maintaining this opinion in face of the actual facts of the Cuban development.

Hansen recognized early the exceptional capacities of the Castro team, which had fused with a mass movement that had the potential to go much further in a revolutionary direction than other nationalist and democratic rebellions had done. In a document entitled "The Character of the New Cuban Government," written in July 1960 for the leadership of the SWP, Hansen said that the Castro government

has courageously defied American imperialism, resisting blandishments, threats, and reprisals. On the domestic side, it has repeatedly mobilized the Cuban workers and peasants in political demonstrations, in

taking over landlord and capitalist holdings, in disarming the forces of the old regime, and in arming the people.

The direction of development on the political side has been demonstrated in the series of crises surmounted by the government since it took power. At first it put bourgeois democratic figures in key positions (finances, foreign trade, diplomacy, even the presidency). With each crisis induced by the interaction of imperialist and revolutionary pressures, these figures either turned against the government or were pushed out, being replaced by active participants in the preceding civil war, however youthful and inexperienced in their new duties.⁴

Hansen summed up this development: "All this points to the conclusion that the new Cuban government is a workers' and farmers' government of the kind defined in our Transitional Program as 'a government independent of the bourgeoisie.'"⁵

Between August and October 1960 the Castro government carried out decisive expropriations of capitalist property in Cuba, in the process moving from a government that was only independent of the bourgeoisie—a workers' and farmers' government—to one that definitively rested on a nationalized, planned economy—a workers' state. This marked the emergence of the first socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere.

Joseph Hansen and the rest of the SWP leadership considered that the mutual recognition and support of the new Cuban workers' state both by the International Committee majority and by the main forces in the International Secretariat was a decisive test. It made the 1953-54 split obsolete and required the rapid reconsolidation of a single Fourth International.

This assessment was not shared by everyone in the two factions. On the side of the International Secretariat, Juan Posadas, the main leader of the IS groups in Latin America, split from the Trotskyist movement in 1962. Pablo also had developed important differences with the program of both of the two factions of the world Trotskyist movement, and while he participated in the reunification in 1963, he split from the International less than two years later.

On the side of the International Committee there were also important internal differences. The British and French supporters of the IC both rejected the characterization of the Cuban government as a workers' state and opposed reunification with the "Pabloites." They refused to join in the 1963 Reunification Congress, at which the old factions were dissolved and the

United Secretariat established as the postsplit day-to-day leadership.

At the time of reunification it was decided that the agreement on the general programmatic fundamentals of Trotskyism, combined with a consensus on the most pressing and immediate questions of world politics, such as Cuba, was sufficient to guarantee a principled fusion of the two currents. Nothing would be gained by postponing reunification until a debate over divergent assessments of the causes of the 1953-54 split or over methodological differences in the abstract could be held. It was decided to await further developments in the class struggle as the best way to measure the solidity of the unification and to discuss different approaches to building proletarian parties in the context of actual material events. This would provide a basis for testing in reality any differences that might arise. It was in this context that the International began in the mid-1960s to weigh its relations with the revolutionary groups and tendencies in Latin America that looked to Havana for inspiration and leadership.

Hansen, who played a major role in organizing the reunification, was intimately involved in these discussions and began at an early date to study the limits of the applicability of the "Cuban model" in struggles elsewhere in Latin America. In the final stages of the negotiations for reunification he and his wife and comrade Reba Hansen made a four-month tour of Latin America, in 1961, where they met with the leaders of many Trotskyist groups and parties on both sides of the IS-IC split. They attended the Reunification Congress in June 1963 in Europe, and shortly afterward began publication in Paris of *World Outlook* (later renamed *Intercontinental Press*). This was a weekly international Trotskyist press service, originally published in mimeographed form, that made available in English regular reports on the major developments in world politics, the activities of Trotskyist forces throughout the world, and documents of many other groups and tendencies in the workers' and socialist movement. This was an enormous aid in permitting members of Trotskyist groups throughout the world to follow the political life of the International and arrive at soundly based opinions on the activities of the Marxist movement in other countries.

In August 1965 in a letter from Paris to Hugo Bressano, a leader of the Argentine Trotskyist movement better known under his pseudonym Nahuel Moreno, Hansen wrote:

I have given a lot of thought to the problem of assessing the role of guerrilla war today in many countries, the positive contributions made in advancing its concept and practice and its many negative sides, including the one-sidedness with which it has been applied at times and the tendency to elevate it into a universally applicable tactic. I intend to write something about it at the earliest opportunity. Meanwhile there have been many discussions about it among comrades here. At the last meeting it was agreed that Livio [Maitan] would write you, indicating the consensus.⁶

It should be noted that at this point, toward the end of 1965, Hansen's correspondence indicates that he felt that a consensus existed in the leadership of the International on this question.

In this letter to Moreno, Hansen singled out the positive experience of the Peruvian Trotskyist Hugo Blanco, who had incorporated elements of guerrilla struggle into the organization of mass peasant unions in the Cuzco region of Peru in the early 1960s: ← as criticized by RD

The criticisms of guerrilla warfare made in your press are of considerable interest. Hugo Blanco's contributions in particular are valuable I think as he offers a positive line and indicates new considerations in fitting the role of guerrilla warfare into the development of the agrarian revolution in a colonial country.

I thought, too, that the analysis of the current struggle in Peru [this refers to the guerrilla front of the Castroist leader Luis de la Puente Uceda—L.E.] which appeared in *La Verdad* [the newspaper of the Argentine Trotskyists] July 26 was very well balanced. The basic support of the struggle was very clear and in this context the criticism of the tactic and the noting of its dangers should, I think, be acceptable to those involved and perhaps will have greater impact than if a harsher or blunter tone were adopted. This is very important, in my opinion, from a political point of view, particularly in trying to win adherents to our own views and in showing younger comrades the best tactical approach where we have differences with other people but also share with them a common revolutionary view.

Shortly after this letter was written, Joseph and Reba Hansen returned to the United States, transferring the publication of *World Outlook* to New York from 1966 on.

Toward the end of 1966, Joseph Hansen laid out his views of the limits of the usefulness of the guerrilla warfare tactic to the November 1966 plenum of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee. It was assumed at that time that this represented the common opinion of the International:

The Trotskyist movement has recognized the positive role played by guerrilla war as a revolutionary technique. Some of the Trotskyists, particularly in Latin America, have given it a good deal of thought deriving from the experiences in their own countries; but as yet the Trotskyist movement as a whole has not gone deeply into the question. I think it is time that the role of guerrilla war, or at least the way it has been practiced in some areas, should be considered more closely.

Here I can give only a few indications.

The first is that in practice there has been a rather strong tendency in certain areas to consider guerrilla war as a panacea. Everything is staked on this one form of struggle as if it could solve all problems.

Second, there is an equally strong tendency to center everything on the peasantry. The key role that can be played by the workers in a revolution is overlooked or disregarded by some of the leaders in this form of struggle. Perhaps they are unaware of the potentialities lodged in the working class. . . .

Third, there is a tendency to substitute geographical concepts for class-struggle concepts. The construction of a "foco," an area controlled by guerrillas, gets put above the need for a firm base among the workers. Dual power becomes equated to dual capitals rather than two centers of polarization in the class struggle.

Fourth, the correct idea that revolutionaries can play a key role in assuring the victory of a revolution at a certain point becomes converted into the idea that a revolution can be inspired by a sufficiently audacious leadership. In other words, what occurs is a reversion to the very old concept of "galvanizing" the masses by spectacular, heroic actions undertaken by a small group in isolation from the masses.

Fifth, the need for carefully studying mass moods and gearing into them with appropriate partial or transitional slogans is disregarded. In some instances, guerrilla fighters have even isolated themselves from the masses in developing armed struggle. The question of phasing the armed struggle and viewing it in relation to the major question of organizing the class is not even considered among some of these revolutionists.

Sixth, the heavy stress on action, which is one of the most positive features of the Cuban example, is often interpreted by guerrilla fighters to mean that theory is relatively unimportant. The result is that some of the guerrilla movements have not advanced clear programs and have evaded taking a principled stand on the need for socialist revolution. . . .

In short, some of the main lessons of the Russian revolution and the example it set do not appear to have been absorbed by some of the guerrilla leaders. They have not yet understood what revolutionary power lies in the hands of the working class and what force resides in the masses of a city when they take the lead in a revolution.⁷

In the next two years all of the weaknesses Hansen criticizes in guerrillaist currents outside of the Fourth International were to

appear within the International itself, ultimately in a section of its central leadership. The first indication of this came to the attention of the SWP leadership in 1967 with reports that the Bolivian Trotskyists were discussing a perspective of undertaking armed actions. At that time all of the Latin American Trotskyist organizations were extremely small—none larger than a few hundred members, and only approaching even that number in Argentina and Bolivia.

One explanation for this development is the actions of the Cuban leadership in 1967 in their efforts to break out of the isolation imposed on them by the U.S. imperialist trade embargo. In July-August of that year the first conference of the Organization of Latin American Solidarity (OLAS—Organización Latinoamericana de Solidaridad) was held in Havana. This assemblage of guerrilla fighters from throughout Latin America had an electrifying effect on radicals throughout the continent. Joseph Hansen attended the OLAS conference. In his report on the conference for the Trotskyist press in the United States he wrote:

It was the largest assembly of authentic representatives of the active guerrilla fronts in Latin America that has yet been held. Cuban sponsorship of the gathering, the sponsorship of a workers' state, gave it added significance. Delegations attended from ten other workers' states and from fourteen international organizations.⁸

Hansen warmly supported the general revolutionary thrust of the OLAS conference, particularly its castigation of the reformists of the Communist and Socialist parties: "The question of armed struggle was thus taken at the OLAS conference as the decisive dividing line separating the revolutionists from the reformists on a continental scale. In this respect it echoed the Bolshevik tradition."⁹

At the same time, Hansen sought to diplomatically suggest to the Cubans the limitations of their strategy of rural guerrilla warfare:

A problem which some delegates were already pondering at OLAS demands the most intensive consideration. This is the problem of the revolutionary struggle in the cities. The key issue is what to do in situations where the masses are not yet prepared to engage in all-out combat but can be mobilized to at least some degree. Is leadership of the workers and the unemployed to be turned over to the right-wing betrayers? Without a battle for the allegiance of the masses? . . .

It is to be noted that the Venezuelan [Communist Party] betrayers, in seeking to answer the damning charges leveled against them by Fidel Castro, have advanced as one of their strongest arguments precisely the question of the revolutionary vanguard maintaining its ties with the masses in the cities. . . . The correct countermove would seem to be to step into the arena of the class struggle in the cities and seek to outflank the right-wing CP leaders to the left. The secret of success lies in the development of transitional slogans which in and of themselves are more realistic than the measures advocated by the reformists yet entail a logic that takes the masses along the road of revolution.

All this is associated with the question of developing a homogeneous leadership and organizational structure capable of giving correct guidance to the revolutionary struggle in all its aspects. This is what revolutionary Marxists mean when they talk about the necessity of building a party of action.¹⁰

For Hansen, what was revolutionary and a step forward about the OLAS conference was the explicit break with a number of the Latin American Stalinist parties, particularly the polemic with the Venezuelan CP, and the attempt to unite the revolutionary vanguard on the Latin American continent. This opened the possibility of a discussion with the Cuban leaders, and with those committed to guerrilla warfare in other countries, over the way to reach the mass of the working class and the need for a Leninist party. For a number of Latin American Trotskyists, however, the idea of proposing a different strategy to the Cubans became lost in the enthusiasm generated by the OLAS meeting. This attitude was deepened by the shock wave later in the year when Che Guevara was killed in Bolivia.

In fact, the death of Che had the effect in Havana of forcing a rethinking of the guerrilla strategy and of the extent of the resources that Cuba should commit to such efforts. This was not immediately perceived by many outside of Cuba, who concluded from the OLAS conference and from the confirmation of Che's involvement in the guerrilla struggle in Bolivia that the Castro government intended to continue to devote very substantial resources to aid guerrilla fighters in other countries of Latin America. This mistaken assumption weighed heavily in their further calculations that the time was ripe for even relatively small groups to turn to rural guerrilla warfare in imitation of Che Guevara.

In November 1968 a majority of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, led by Ernest Mandel, Livio Maitan, and Pierre Frank, submitted a "Draft Resolution on Latin America"

to the discussion preceding the world congress of the Fourth International scheduled for the following April. The first article in this book, "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America," was Hansen's criticism of that document. "Instead of drawing a balance sheet" on the experience of guerrilla warfare, ^{as} he wrote, ". . . the draft resolution simply proposes a continental tactic or strategy of technical preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period." ^{regu} He added: "The truth of it is that the resolution is a rather faithful reflection of the publicly expressed views of the Cuban leadership on this question."

At the world congress itself, the adaptation of several of the older leaders to the guerrillaist current was reinforced by the inexperience and ultraleft bent of many of the newly won youth. A snowball effect gained momentum for the "turn," against which Hansen and other opponents of the resolution could muster only a minority showing. From that point on, guerrilla warfare began to be elevated from a tactic that could be used if appropriate according to local conditions to facilitate constructing a party, into a strategy that was regarded as the means to further progress. There was a concomitant tendency to elevate military questions over politics. This drift toward ultraleftism deepened in the International for a number of years.

Hansen considered that this "turn" raised grave dangers for the world Trotskyist movement on two counts. First was the immediate risks for the individuals who tried to implement this strategy in practice: the unnecessary losses and victimizations of comrades, missed opportunities, and the risks of becoming isolated from the masses. Second was the risk of bringing to the fore the weaknesses in the International's class composition: most of its newer members had come out of the student movement; it was important that this had been seen as a temporary stage in the construction of the International and that a road be opened to recruitment from the working class. Adaptation to the guerrillaist current, Hansen maintained, stood in the way of such a line of march.

It did not take very long to acquire some experience on the workability of the line adopted by the majority at the 1969 world congress. In 1970, the official section of the International in Argentina, the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT—Revolutionary Workers Party), *Combatiente* faction, launched its own permanent urban guerrilla group, the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP—Revolutionary Army of the

People). The ERP was soon one of the best-known guerrilla organizations in Latin America. It was also on a trajectory that led to confrontations with the capitalist state that it could not win and which cost a large number of lives. Politically, its course would, by 1973, take it out of the Trotskyist movement.

In Bolivia, the 1969 world congress line led to severe setbacks for the section there, the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR—Revolutionary Workers Party).

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Joseph Hansen warned early in the discussion that the turn to a strategy of guerrilla warfare could not logically be confined to Latin America. Its whole conception rested on the idea of exemplary actions and minority violence in isolation from the masses. With a little imagination, once such premises were accepted as strategically acceptable and useful, they could be applied in some form in any country.

Hansen's counterargument developed in several stages. In the initial articles the focus remained on Latin America—on the objections from a Marxist viewpoint to trying to lay down these continentwide tactics. As he felt the scope of the ultraleft influence on the majority leadership became more defined, he turned to a broad historic defense of the Leninist strategy of party building in a restatement of the basic principles of the Fourth International. It is at this stage that "In Defense of the Leninist Strategy of Party Building" was written, in March 1971. This article, in reply to arguments by Livio Maitan, and by Ernest Germain (Ernest Mandel) and Martine Knoeller (Gisela Mandel), sought to document the actual experience of the Marxist movement with guerrilla warfare; to demonstrate the adaptation of a number of sections of the Fourth International in the advanced capitalist countries to ultraleftism; and to explain at some length the Marxist conception of revolutionary armed struggle, arising not out of the actions of small groups but from the self-defense actions of mass organizations.

In December 1972 a meeting of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International was held. By that time the experiences in Argentina and Bolivia had already objectively demonstrated the disastrous character of the course chosen by the 1969 world congress majority. In preparation for this meeting of the IEC a number of the leaders of the minority in the International drafted a document—"Argentina and Bolivia—the

Balance Sheet"—that provided a detailed and substantiated account of the destructive line followed by the official sections in those two countries. In addition to Joseph Hansen, the authors were Hugo Blanco; Peter Camejo, a Venezuelan-American leader of the SWP who had spent much time in Latin America; Aníbal Lorenzo; and Nahuel Moreno. These last two were central leaders of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers Party) of Argentina, a sympathizing section of the Fourth International and by far the largest Trotskyist organization in Latin America. (The PST had formerly shared the name PRT with the group that had organized the ERP, the two PRT factions being distinguished by the names of their newspapers, *La Verdad* and *El Combatiente*.)

When it became clear at the December 1972 IEC meeting that the majority could not be persuaded to reconsider their course, the supporters of the minority resolution called for the formation of an international tendency committed to reversing the orientation toward guerrilla warfare. This was organized at a meeting in Santiago, Chile, in March 1973, where the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency (LTT) was founded. The IEC majority at the December 1972 meeting also organized a tendency, known at first as the IEC Majority Tendency and later as the International Majority Tendency (IMT).

Later in 1973 the LTT came to the conclusion that the IMT was in fact functioning as a secret faction, deciding its positions through prior caucus meetings before bringing them into the leading bodies of the International, carrying on its own internal discussion outside the regular channels of international communication, etc. This posed the danger that the faction body that controlled the majority vote in the leading committees was beginning to regard itself as the "real" International, where all important discussions and decisions were made, while the elected leadership bodies of the International were becoming simply a forum for the presentation of previously decided questions pushed through by a bloc vote. Under such circumstances the discussion would become frozen. Such a situation could even lead to a split in the International. The LTT concluded that the best way to prevent a split would be to exercise some discipline over its own adherents in order to forestall any ill-considered actions from its own side in the dispute. It decided to reorganize itself as the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTF) to prevent a split and continue the fight to reverse the guerrilla orientation.

In February 1974 another world congress was held. There the

erroneous orientation of the 1969 "turn" was once again reaffirmed. Moreover, it was further generalized through the adoption of a "Resolution on Armed Struggle in Latin America." At the congress Joseph Hansen gave the counterreport to this resolution for the LTF. This time the vote was quite close.

In his report to the New York supporters of the LTF afterward, Joseph Hansen said that he considered that the persistence in the ultraleft line, and its broadening at the world congress to include advocacy of "minority violence" in countries far removed from Latin America, constituted a "crisis in orientation and leadership of the Fourth International." (His report is included in this volume.) It had been revealed as something more than a political mistake. "I think that the key," Hansen said, "lies in their lack of roots in the working class and the labor movement. They lack the steadying influence of immersion in the proletariat. . . . The line of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency represents a bending to the radicalized petty-bourgeois milieu from which many young cadres of the Fourth International have emerged and in which they are still working."

In that difficult period, when the integrity and unity of the world movement was threatened, the SWP leadership considered it imperative to contain factional tensions and to persistently propose to the majority a line of retreat that offered a possibility of resolving the crisis.

An example of this took place at the August 1976 convention of the SWP. A world movement report was given there by Alan Jones, a leader of the International Marxist Group of Britain and a member of the United Secretariat majority. Jones said that he saw the possibility of a split in the International in the existing situation (an outcome he strongly opposed). In the discussion, Hansen took the floor. "The situation in the United Secretariat is abnormal," he said, "and it leads to many abnormal consequences."

The normal procedure there, or rather the abnormal procedure there, is that the main decisions are made in caucuses. The IMT caucus, in particular, brings in its judgments, which are then debated, sometimes, and sometimes rushed through without much of a debate. So, that situation has been getting worse, progressively worse. And today we are faced with a situation that is very serious, in my opinion, because as Comrade Jones has pointed out it has raised the question in some comrades' minds of a split.

The responsibility in the United Secretariat rests *with the majority*, and when I say *majority* I mean the IMT; that's precisely the way it should be

characterized. And their responsibility is to reverse this situation if it is at all humanly possible. I think that among some of their ranks, the seasoned Trotskyists in particular, they see what is happening and should consider some ways of initiating efforts to change it, to make a turn; one at least as important as the turn in 1969.

A year and a half ago the LTF proposed that the factions dissolve. That would have been one big step forward to ameliorating the situation. This was rejected by the IMT. They preferred the factions to continue, and when I say factions, this refers in particular to the IMT, which began as a secret faction, has maintained a faction despite pretenses of calling itself a tendency, and which is now merging, developing, more and more in the direction of a sect, and down the road a little bit further, turning into a cult, with a genius leader.

I think the IMT should consider this situation very seriously and reconsider their position on the question of dissolving factions, because if we can get together on that question, and discuss it truly, see all the possibilities that might be open with that, which would include discussions with other groupings, then it is possible we can reverse the present trend. And the idea of a split would be the last thing that would occur to comrades of any one of the tendencies.¹¹

A few months later, in December 1976, the first important break appeared in the factional deadlock. The steering committee of the IMT, responding to criticisms both from the LTF and from within its own ranks, took the first step in a turn back from the course it had adopted in 1969. The steering committee issued a statement of self-criticism that conceded many of the points that had been argued since 1969 by Hansen and those who had later formed the LTF. In a key passage this document (reprinted as Appendix II to this volume) said:

At the Ninth World Congress we paid the price for this lack of systematic analysis of the Cuban revolution. On the basis of rapid and hasty generalizations, *we did not clearly oppose the incorrect lessons* drawn from the Cuban revolution by the great majority of the Latin American vanguard. Even though what had really happened in Cuba provided us with the necessary means, we did not adequately combat the idea—which cost so many deaths and defeats in Latin America—that a few dozen or a few hundred revolutionaries (no matter how courageous and capable) isolated from the rest of society could set in motion a historic process leading to a socialist revolution.¹²

The leadership of the LTF immediately responded to this step forward by the IMT, weighing the significance of the turnabout and renewing the proposal to dissolve the international factions.

Published as Appendix III to this volume is the report on the IMT self-criticism made by Jack Barnes, the SWP's national secretary, to the party's National Committee in January 1977, where he outlined a series of steps that could end the crisis in the International.

After the beginning of the reversal of the IMT on the question of guerrilla warfare and minority violence, the further existence of the international factions became more and more an obstacle to genuine international collaboration. To put an end to this situation the steering committee of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction at a meeting August 15-17, 1977, decided to unilaterally dissolve. Three months later the IMT followed suit.

Naturally, not every disputed question was resolved. Disagreements remained over a number of important issues. Nevertheless, a very substantial area of agreement emerged among the majorities of the two former adversary currents. These are exemplified in the common draft world political resolution and the common draft resolution on Latin America agreed to in 1978 in preparation for the 1979 world congress.

The common draft resolution "The World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International," completed in July 1978, reaffirmed the International's proletarian orientation and projected the winning of industrial workers to the International as a major focus of its work:

Since its foundation, the Fourth International has followed a proletarian orientation without overlooking opportunities to recruit in allied layers of the population. The essence of this orientation consists of advancing the Marxist program and utilizing the method of the Transitional Program to intervene as much as possible in the politics of the country and developments in the working class and its organizations. It includes recognition of the fact that only a party that is proletarian in composition as well as program, and has earned growing respect by the workers for its leadership role in the class struggle, can win a majority of the toiling masses to its banner and lead them in the struggle for power.

In many countries the majority of comrades are union members, but strong industrial union fractions remain to be built. New opportunities have now opened up for gains in the industrial proletariat. Success in utilizing these opportunities requires special efforts, including mobilization of cadres recruited in the previous period. In many countries these cadres have not yet become rooted in the industrial working class. They should be led to make a turn in this direction without further delay. Their participation in trade-union fraction work from the base of jobs in

industry can perceptibly increase the rate of successes of the party's political campaigns—as Trotsky put it in discussing the Transitional Program—by showing the workers how to think socially and act politically.¹³

This orientation was closely linked with the need to proletarianize the class composition the International had inherited from the unusual weight of the student component in the radicalization of the 1960s:

On the internal level, it will facilitate training leaders and solving organizational problems in all aspects of our work. The struggle for proletarian parties includes consciously cultivating the functioning of leadership as collective teams; it means promoting inclusive leadership bodies that organize themselves in a democratic and objective way, including in their composition comrades of different viewpoints and experiences in the party; it means education on the theoretical and political importance of the organization question; it means conscious attention to the development of workers, women, and comrades from oppressed nationalities, as rounded party leaders; it means education against the dangers of permanent factionalism and cliquism, which can tear apart young and inexperienced organizations. The goal is parties of experienced worker-Bolsheviks who view themselves as political leaders of their class and its allies.¹⁴

The common resolution on Latin America took up once more the experience with guerrilla warfare:

The strategy of guerrilla warfare, which was promoted by a large number of revolutionary-minded militants in Latin America during the 1960s, has proved to be a failure.

The guerrilla warfare currents became important throughout Latin America after the Cuban revolution. An entire generation was inspired and radicalized by the Cuban revolution and the prospects for repeating the Cuban success elsewhere in Latin America. . . .

But the strategy of guerrilla warfare, in both its rural and urban varieties, remained peripheral to the main needs and concerns of the masses. The essential feature of the guerrillaist line was reliance on the exemplary actions of small groups. The guerrillaist currents did not advance a program capable of leading the workers and drawing behind them the peasants and oppressed masses in a consistent struggle against the ruling classes.¹⁵

This resolution speaks quite frankly about some of the International majority's mistakes:

The Fourth International promoted an incorrect political orientation in Latin America for several years. The clearest and most developed expression of this incorrect line is contained in the following reports and resolutions on Latin America adopted by a majority vote at the 1969 and 1974 world congresses of the Fourth International (Ninth and Tenth World Congresses—Third and Fourth World Congresses Since Reunification):

a. At the world congress in 1969: the report and "Resolution on Latin America."

b. At the world congress in 1974: the report and resolution on "Balance Sheet and Orientation for the Bolivian Revolution"; the report and resolution on "Argentina: Political Crisis and Revolutionary Perspectives"; the report and resolution on "Armed Struggle in Latin America."

As a result of this erroneous line, many of the cadres and parties of the Fourth International were politically disarmed in face of the widespread, but false idea that a small group of courageous and capable revolutionaries could set in motion a process leading to a socialist revolution. The process of rooting our parties in the working class and oppressed masses was hindered. The line that was followed not only cut across the possibility of winning cadres from the guerrillaist tendencies to a revolutionary Marxist program, but also led to adventurist actions and losses from our own ranks. The consequences for our small movement were most severe in Argentina and Bolivia.

Accordingly, the Fourth International rescinds the erroneous line on Latin America adopted at the 1969 and 1974 World Congresses. The line of this resolution on Latin America now supersedes the previous line.¹⁶

Joseph Hansen helped to draft both of these resolutions which closed the book on the ten-year struggle over guerrillaism and perspectives within the Fourth International. A few weeks after the resolution on Latin America was adopted by the United Secretariat, Joseph Hansen died in New York City, on January 18, 1979. He was sixty-eight years old. These are his contributions to what was probably the richest debate in the world Marxist movement since the early congresses of the Communist International. They are of lasting value and include some of the finest Marxist polemics ever written.

Leslie Evans
June 1, 1979

Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America

The draft resolution on Latin America submitted by the United Secretariat for the consideration of the delegates at the next world congress of the Fourth International falls broadly into two parts.¹ About one-half of the document consists of a summary of the economic, social, and political conditions in Latin America that point to the perspective of socialist revolution. The second half or so proposes a general tactic applicable on a continental scale to assure success in the struggle for this perspective, namely, the technical preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period. Included in the second part, in passing, are polemics in support of the proposed continentwide tactic.

Nothing essentially new is advanced in the economic summary. The economic tendencies "remain pretty much the same as in the past." Under capitalism only stagnation and further decline lie ahead, with the imperialist grip becoming ever tighter and costlier.

Similarly, in the role of the social classes, the processes of "the past fifteen years" have seen a decline in the weight of the landlords, while the increased weight of the urban ruling strata has been offset by the crippling operations of U.S. imperialism. The national bourgeoisie is incapable of offering any historical perspective.

As for the "new petty-bourgeois strata" that have appeared in the "last fifteen to twenty years," these constitute the strongest

This document was submitted to the international discussion preceding the April 1969 world congress of the Fourth International (Third Congress Since Reunification [Ninth World Congress]). It was first published in the *International Information Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), no. 3, February 1969.

ideological base for imperialism, although they are subject to being swept into the vortex of revolution.

The peasantry is declining in relative size but still remains the majority, has the least perspective, and is charged with discontent and anger. The peasants display a persistent inclination to engage in struggle and revolt; have learned revolutionary lessons; and have ties with the revolutionary students in the cities.

The working class is not a relatively privileged layer. The workers do not view themselves as being privileged, and "have not ceased in reality to be an explosive force, a motor force of the revolution." They, like the peasants, have ties with the revolutionary students. They have engaged in powerful strikes "in defiance of the military dictatorships" and there are "significant symptoms of a proletarian resurgence at the present time."

The plebeian masses in the cities, who have emigrated from the rural areas, represent another "explosive potential" which has already partially expressed itself several times in "the last ten years."

The revolutionary student movement has turned out to be so powerful that it has already shaken several Latin American countries. Despite its limitations, the student movement is capable of "stimulating or deepening revolutionary crises."

In the political arena, the "democratic" regimes have ended in bankruptcy. The relative political stability of countries like Uruguay and Mexico is gone. Military regimes are on the rise; but they, too, are in continual crisis.

Thus Latin America is characterized by "structural instability" on a continental scale, by "more precisely a prerevolutionary situation which is taking the form of both a more or less rapid ripening of profound social and political explosions . . . the outbreak of real revolutionary crises . . . and the emergence of a state of civil war in certain countries. . . ."

Hence the general conclusion to be drawn, in the light of the international context and the continued existence of Cuba, is that the perspective is one of "mounting social and political tensions tending toward the outbreak of revolutionary situations."

The document emphasizes that there is no way out economically for the ruling classes and imperialism in Latin America: "the situation is hopeless for any economic solution, with all the inevitable implications this entails in the political field."

This means internecine struggles within the ruling class as the difficulties mount while the margin for maneuver left open to American imperialism constantly shrinks.

From this it must be concluded that not only in a broad historical sense, "but in a more direct and immediate one," Latin America has entered a period of "revolutionary explosions and conflicts."

Allowing for a possible degree of exaggeration as, for example, in the estimate of the general political level of the peasantry on a continental scale ("the peasants . . . have assimilated the lesson of the Cuban revolution"), the general conclusions outlined in the resolution are shared by probably all of the revolutionary tendencies and even by the more objective specialists in the imperialist camp. From the viewpoint of the Trotskyist movement there is every reason for the greatest optimism about the perspectives in Latin America.

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But it is precisely here that a disappointing note is struck. The document indicates considerable reservations as to the possibility of a major victory anywhere in Latin America in the near future. These reservations are not developed. They are merely indicated in arguing for the general tactic of technical preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period.

Thus the following assertion appears in point 16:

The exceptional variant of an explosive crisis involving the breaking up or paralysis of the state apparatus and a mass mobilization so impetuous that it could prevent or neutralize recourse to repression as a decisive measure cannot be categorically excluded, but a strategy on a continental scale cannot be based on exceptional phenomena, and in such a case imperialism would very likely intervene militarily (as happened already in the case of Santo Domingo).²

In the context of the analysis of the general economic, social, and political situation, this paragraph is hard to explain. It has been specified that on a continental scale "a prerevolutionary situation" is shaping up, with the ripening of "profound social and political explosions" and the "outbreak of real revolutionary crises." Nevertheless, we are told that a crisis explosive enough to paralyze a state apparatus or a mass mobilization of truly impetuous character, while it cannot be excluded, is an "exceptional variant."

If the variant is actually exceptional, there must be definite reasons for it. Either the economic situation is not hopeless for the Latin American ruling class, or they are not as decrepit as

indicated, or the masses are not as revolutionary-minded as painted, or the candidates for revolutionary leadership are not likely to measure up to the political challenge involved.

The alternative would seem to be that either the general analysis is defective or the resolution takes a pessimistic view of the possibilities of constructing a revolutionary leadership.

The resolution does not go into this. With its reference to Santo Domingo, the paragraph ends on a note reminiscent of the days before the Cuban revolution when even some revolutionists were of the opinion that if a revolution happened to break out and win power in one of the smaller countries of Latin America it would quickly be crushed by U.S. imperialism. The revolutionary experience in Santo Domingo, where an urban explosion precipitated the biggest crisis which U.S. imperialism has had to face up to now concurrent with the Vietnam War, would seem to deserve better appreciation in a resolution summing up the major developments in Latin America for the past decade and projecting possibilities for the future.

It should be mentioned in passing that it is difficult to follow the logic of saying that U.S. imperialism will "likely intervene militarily" in the event of a major explosive crisis as in the case of Santo Domingo while saying nothing about the continual intervention of the CIA and Pentagon in the conflicts with rural guerrilla forces. The fact that the military challenge offered by the guerrillas has been successfully met by U.S. imperialism and its agents in the past nine years by a relatively modest outlay in arms, advisers, and participants (and minimum overhead political cost) as compared with the outlay and political cost of a military invasion on the scale of the Santo Domingo operation (or the Bay of Pigs)³ can hardly be considered a reason for ignoring it, unless the view is held that intervention by U.S. imperialism at this level is, because of the small forces involved, really unimportant in the continental strategy of technical preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period.

The same depreciation of what is possible practically in Latin America would also appear to be involved in the argument in point 15 in which the resolution warns revolutionists to be on guard "against simplistic schemas," but also warns that on the other hand "no concession whatever must be made to ideas according to which the armed confrontation, conceived as the culmination of a progressive rise and broadening of the mass movement, can in principle be reduced to a minimum."

The warning seems to be not to count on any progressive rise

and broadening of the mass movement that would culminate with such force as to paralyze and shatter the central power.

The underlying doubts about what is really possible in Latin America emerge still more clearly in point 16 where the resolution refers to the great mass mobilizations of 1968 in such urban centers as Mexico City.⁴ Directed at the false theorizing of those who doubt the capacities of the working class and the urban masses to play a dynamic revolutionary role, the argument is qualified as follows:

Nonetheless, revolutionary Marxists cannot conclude from this that the "classical" variant calling for a progressive rise and broadening of the mass movement and its structuring and reenforcement through traditional organizational forms before it reaches the armed struggle has been revalidated. In the international context, after all the experiences of the last decade and in face of an increasingly brutal repression by the native ruling classes and imperialism, such a variant is not the most probable.

This affirmation stands in contradiction to the principal conclusion of the first part of the main resolution, "The New Rise of the World Revolution," drafted for the forthcoming world congress. That document states:

This new revolutionary rise means that essentially proletarian forces and vanguard political currents carrying on the traditions of revolutionary Marxism and workers democracy will be in the thick of the fight, that their methods of intervening, of action, and organization will draw much closer to the classical norm of proletarian revolutions.⁵

Quite clearly, on this point the draft resolution on the world situation is at variance with the draft resolution on Latin America. In deciding which of these opposing positions to adopt, it is to be hoped that the delegates will decide that the perspectives in Latin America are not qualitatively different from those in the world as a whole. The conclusion of the main resolution follows logically from the general analysis of the world situation—the revolutionary pattern is giving evidence of drawing closer to the "classical norm." What is out of line is the conclusion of the document on Latin America that "such a variant is not the most probable" in that part of the world.

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Naturally, arguments that may be advanced in favor of the latter view should be heard and weighed with the greatest attention; and, if they turn out to be persuasive, then the main resolution should be altered accordingly.

In the draft resolution on Latin America only one argument is advanced on this question. It is limited to happenings in Latin America and does not refer to the conclusions drawn in the main resolution. However, the argument could be advanced with regard to situations in a number of other areas, including the countries in the imperialist sector. Here is the argument:

In reality, the adversary is in nowise ready to allow a mass revolutionary movement to organize more or less legally or normally, not only because in the given economic and social conditions a general mobilization even for economic goals would threaten disastrous consequences for the system, but also and above all because the men in power no longer underestimate the dynamics of mass movements, even when they start off with limited objectives.

In essence the argument is not new. Not since the first appearances of the proletariat as an independent political force has the adversary taken a permissive attitude toward revolutionary formations, including small ones. The Fourth International has had a rich experience in this. Underestimation by the adversary of the potential of revolutionary groups or mass mobilizations is truly an "exceptional variant." Our movement has always proceeded on the assumption that the adversary sees his class interests clearly and appreciates the dangers besetting them perhaps better than anyone else, even though at a certain point he may be struck by paralysis of the will and may close his eyes to what is happening. The lesson drawn by the Bolsheviks on this, and repeated by Trotsky, is that revolutionists in face of the most savage repression have no choice but to continue their patient political and organizational work—in the underground or in exile.

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The proposals on strategy and tactics in the draft resolution should be considered in relation to the contradiction between the appreciation of the truly enormous explosiveness of the situation and the doubts as to the real possibilities for a successful revolution in Latin America along the lines of the Russian revolution in 1917.

"The problem now posed in Latin America," it is stated in point 14, "is not primarily that of determining which are the driving forces of the revolution, a problem which for revolutionary Marxists has been resolved at the theoretical level." The driving forces consist of the working class, backed by a peasant revolt and aided by its allies among the petty bourgeoisie and the student youth. Nor is the primary problem one of the size of the forces. "Gigantic forces composed of millions of men and women in fact exist and can be mobilized in revolutionary struggle now or in the next stage." We reach the nub of the question. The "real problem" is to work out a strategy that can succeed, bearing in mind the "crying contradiction between the objective potential and the subjective will to struggle of broad strata on the one hand and on the other by the persistent weakness of the organized vanguard. . . ."

This is a restatement, in terms of the Latin American situation today, of the key question posed on a broader scale thirty years ago in the Transitional Program:

The strategic task of the next period—a prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda, and organization—consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation, the inexperience of the younger generation).⁶

How is this crying contradiction to be resolved? A fruitful approach for a resolution on Latin America that seeks to make an advance in this respect might be to examine concretely the reasons for "the persistent weakness of the organized vanguard." This would mean considering the experiences in each country—what actually happened, for instance, in the various guerrilla struggles, what policies were followed, what actions were undertaken, and how these were related (or not related) to the specific economic, social, and political situations in which they occurred and which they sought to affect. The examination should not be limited to the record of the anti-Trotskyist tendencies active in these struggles. The course followed by the Trotskyist groups or parties in each of these countries should likewise be presented and evaluated, particularly as to how they contributed to (or hampered) carrying out the task of building a revolutionary Marxist combat party. As an example of what is required, the excellent beginning made by Hugo Blanco in evaluating the experiences of his group can be cited.⁷

Transitional Program

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The proposals on strategy and tactics in the draft resolution should be considered in relation to the contradiction between the appreciation of the truly enormous explosiveness of the situation and the doubts as to the real possibilities for a successful revolution in Latin America along the lines of the Russian revolution in 1917.

"The problem now posed in Latin America," it is stated in point 14, "is not primarily that of determining which are the driving forces of the revolution, a problem which for revolutionary Marxists has been resolved at the theoretical level." The driving forces consist of the working class, backed by a peasant revolt and aided by its allies among the petty bourgeoisie and the student youth. Nor is the primary problem one of the size of the forces. "Gigantic forces composed of millions of men and women in fact exist and can be mobilized in revolutionary struggle now or in the next stage." We reach the nub of the question. The "real problem" is to work out a strategy that can succeed, bearing in mind the "crying contradiction between the objective potential and the subjective will to struggle of broad strata on the one hand and on the other by the persistent weakness of the organized vanguard. . . ."

This is a restatement, in terms of the Latin American situation today, of the key question posed on a broader scale thirty years ago in the Transitional Program:

The strategic task of the next period—a prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda, and organization—consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation, the inexperience of the younger generation).⁶

How is this crying contradiction to be resolved? A fruitful approach for a resolution on Latin America that seeks to make an advance in this respect might be to examine concretely the reasons for "the persistent weakness of the organized vanguard." This would mean considering the experiences in each country—what actually happened, for instance, in the various guerrilla struggles, what policies were followed, what actions were undertaken, and how these were related (or not related) to the specific economic, social, and political situations in which they occurred and which they sought to affect. The examination should not be limited to the record of the anti-Trotskyist tendencies active in these struggles. The course followed by the Trotskyist groups or parties in each of these countries should likewise be presented and evaluated, particularly as to how they contributed to (or hampered) carrying out the task of building a revolutionary Marxist combat party. As an example of what is required, the excellent beginning made by Hugo Blanco in evaluating the experiences of his group can be cited.⁷

Transitional Program

as justification for adventures doomed to certain defeat.

The proposed tactic can hardly be weighed properly without referring to its relation to the success of the Cuban revolution and to the way, since then, it has been extrapolated by the Cuban leadership in Latin America and elsewhere. The resolution fails to do this in even the most summary fashion.

* * *

The following considerations may prove useful as a point of departure for probing this question:

1. Guerrilla war in Latin America was not the invention of the Cubans. It has existed in the continent as a living tradition with a venerable history.

2. One of the most unexpected features of the Cuban revolution was that this tactic could prove sufficient to win. Our conclusion at the time was that this testified much more to the weakness of imperialism and the national-bourgeois structure than to the discovery of something superior to a Leninist combat party.

3. More than a mere guerrilla band was involved in the Cuban struggle. The July 26 Movement had an extensive organization.⁹ Its petty-bourgeois program enabled it to secure financial assistance in a big way from Cuban bourgeois circles. It was also able to operate quite freely in the United States, where it was actively supported by a large Cuban colony.

4. The July 26 Movement proceeded to a considerable extent like a party based on a single issue—armed struggle against the Batista dictatorship. Its appeal cut across class lines.

5. The key leaders of this movement were of such high caliber that when the revolution reached the crossing point to socialism, they plunged ahead, splitting their own movement and transcending the program they had begun with.

6. In transcending their original program and declaring for socialism, they also transcended the tactic through which they had won. Just as every future revolution in Latin America must take as its model *socialist* Cuba instead of the July 26 Movement as it was first formed, so in tactics it is compelled, if success is to be assured, to make an advance, developing means capable of achieving the mass mobilizations required to win a socialist revolution. This means putting politics in command. Technique, tactics, even armed struggle, must be subordinated to political consciousness, to political direction, to a clear political program.

The key problem, consequently, is to build a combat party capable of seeing this and doing it.

7. The Cuban leaders, although the logic of their own revolution calls for it, have not proceeded along this line up to now. The reasons for this are plain. Dependent on aid from the Soviet Union, aid which was absolutely essential to the survival of the Cuban revolution, they were confronted with the problem of the Kremlin's policy of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism and in particular its rabid opposition to Trotskyism. The course followed by the Cubans shows that they decided that if errors were to be made, they should be made on the side of caution so as not to jeopardize the flow of material aid. This explains why the Cuban Stalinists were not reproved for their gross attacks on Trotskyism and why Castro himself could make the kind of attack he did at the Tricontinental Conference in January 1966.¹⁰ It explains, too, why the Cubans took such an ambiguous attitude during the May-June 1968 events in France and why to this day they refrain from publicizing the role of the Trotskyists in the French upsurge.¹¹ And it explains why Castro—with very important reservations, it is true—came out on the side of the invaders of Czechoslovakia.¹² In short, the Cubans have not yet settled accounts with Stalinism. Until they have done so, it is misleading to say without qualification, as the resolution does in point 11: "This leadership by its attitudes, its actions and generalizations has contributed in a decisive way to the maturing of a new vanguard."

8. There is an immense anomaly in this failure to settle accounts with Stalinism, inasmuch as the Castro team won their victory in Cuba in face of the default of the Blas Roca and their active opposition.¹³ One of the main lessons of the Cuban revolution is that it is now possible to outflank the Stalinists from the left.

9. Instead of fostering an extension of this course elsewhere in Latin America, the Castro team sought to utilize the existing Communist parties. On the surface, it appeared feasible to repeat the political formula of the Cuban revolution—but with a different combination of political tendencies from those assembled in the July 26 Movement in the struggle against the Batista dictatorship. The formula was to suppress the political differences with the Stalinists and form a combination on the single issue of armed struggle against the indigenous dictatorships and their imperialist backers. The basic idea was once again to make

politics secondary to technique, to subordinate political strategy to the tactic of rural guerrilla war.

The results were hardly brilliant. No sector of the opposing camp was taken in by the camouflage. The lack of political clarity could only serve to sow confusion in the ranks of the revolutionists. Still worse, greater forces were now required to win; i.e., the masses in the urban centers. But the tactic itself was not designed to raise their political understanding, to organize and mobilize them. It banked on winning by pitting very small contingents in skirmishes remote from the cities. Moreover, the political confusion in the camp of the revolutionists involved a decisive issue in the new stage of the Latin American revolution—the role of Stalinism. Lack of clarity on this led to some very costly defeats.

The Cubans have made progress in overcoming this limitation, but only through very painful experiences. It is the beginning of political wisdom to insist that revolutions in Latin America, or elsewhere in the world where similar conditions exist, cannot be won along a “peaceful” or “democratic” road, or under the leadership of an alleged progressive sector of the national bourgeoisie. The issue, once considered in the radical movement to be a hallmark of “Trotskyism,” proved to be of key importance in bringing the Cubans to understand that Stalinism and organizations dominated by Stalinists are not reliable instruments of revolution. But by confining the dispute with the Stalinists almost exclusively to the issue of armed struggle, and limiting it even further to the question of rural guerrilla war, the Cubans gave precious political ground to their opponents by default. Thus the Stalinist betrayers of the revolutionary struggle in Venezuela were able to advance telling arguments on why the workers need a revolutionary party. For the Venezuelan Stalinists, who cited Lenin in a completely abstract way, this was only a smoke screen; but the Cubans were not able to answer them effectively and this could not fail to influence at least some good, revolutionary-minded militants. In the same way, the Cubans failed to offer an adequate challenge to the Stalinists in the urban centers, making it easier for them to retain a rather large following which they, of course, are now seeking to use in their wheeling and dealing in the bourgeois electoral arena.

The Cubans likewise conceded the field of theory to the Stalinists under the hardly laudable guise of ridiculing the “theorists” as against men of action, who don’t need to learn

about revolution in books inasmuch as they are practicing it with guns.

The Cubans even made the mistake of posing the issue in terms of a conflict between the men in the mountains and the bureaucrats in the city over who should have final command. Arguments were adduced concerning the technical difficulties of urban guerrilla war, the helplessness of the masses, the corrupting influence of the city, the difficulties and dangers of maintaining liaison, to explain why leadership should be in the hands of the men in the rural areas. The political issue underlying this obscure debate was very simple: Should the struggle be led by men committed to a revolutionary struggle for socialism or by men committed to Moscow's treacherous foreign policy of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism? This was the key question no matter where the leadership was located under the exigencies of the struggle. But this issue, which should have been brought to the fore in order to clarify the dispute and to fight for a majority on the basis of it, was left in obscurity by the Cubans. The Stalinists took full advantage of the ineptness of the Cubans, or their hesitation at speaking out because of possible economic pressure from Moscow, to further obscure and bury the question.

The result of these mistakes was that even in such a favorable situation as the one in Venezuela, with the prestige of the Cuban revolution behind them, and the not immaterial advantages of state power, the Cubans ended up in their factional struggle with the Stalinists in a small minority.

10. Immediately after the Cuban victory, the Trotskyist movement held that one of the most important tasks facing the revolution there was construction of a revolutionary Marxist party. This has been borne out in the most decisive way by events and ought to be pointed out in the draft resolution on Latin America.

11. The key task facing the vanguard in Latin America, as elsewhere, still remains the construction of a revolutionary Marxist party. This takes priority over all questions of tactics and strategy in the sense that these must be directed to achieving this end as the decisive link in the revolutionary process. It is not enough to say, as the resolution does in point 19, that "the existence and functioning of a revolutionary party, far from being an outworn schema of outmoded Marxists, corresponds to the concrete and ineluctable needs of the development of the armed struggle itself. . . ."

The party is not a means to the armed struggle, as this sentence seems to say; the armed struggle is a means to bring the proletariat to power under the leadership of the party. Construction of the party must be viewed and presented as the central task, the main orientation, the almost exclusive preoccupation of the vanguard. And the explosiveness of the situation in Latin America does not lessen the need; it intensifies it.

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In light of this, it is disorienting to present the party as an adjunct to the development of armed struggle. But this is what the draft resolution appears to do in the following aspects:

1. In recruiting a minimum number of militants. Point 15 states, "It must not be forgotten that the . . . application of such a strategy requires first assembling a minimum of organized and politically homogeneous forces."
2. In helping to solve the problem of liaison between the guerrillas and the masses. Point 18 suggests that the solution lies through special tactical applications of guerrilla war and through the development of immediate and transitional demands, the latter helping to mobilize and raise the political consciousness of the masses as well as create growing tensions that "also make it more difficult for the governments to concentrate their repressive forces exclusively in the zones of armed struggle." Either these political tasks are performed by the party, or the guerrillas themselves do it. In either case, these party tasks are conceived in the light of how they affect the achievement of guerrilla war and not vice versa.
3. In helping to direct into fruitful fields groups temporarily unoccupied with revolutionary work. As point 18 suggests, a transitional program can be utilized to help "certain revolutionary organizations" which, while "having been formed for revolutionary combat and armed struggle . . . have been unable for conjunctural reasons to put their ideas into practice."
4. In providing revolutionists with something to do in countries "where the armed struggle is not on the agenda at present." As indicated in point 19, they should "take advantage of the breathing space" to struggle "for the most favorable variant," seeking to build at least a solid nucleus on a national scale if a genuine, completely structured party with large mass influence is not already in existence (which the resolution considers to be "a very

unrealistic perspective in almost all of the Latin American countries").

In the four points above, the formulations in the resolution, taken in conjunction with the proposed tactical orientation, could give the impression that our movement conceives the party not as the key link in mobilizing the masses for the conquest of power but simply as a useful instrument in the tactic of engaging in rural guerrilla war and as a constructive way to fill in time while waiting for an opportune moment to plunge into the really revolutionary work of armed struggle. If this impression is correct, then the draft resolution on Latin America would appear to be in conflict with the projected main resolution of the coming world congress, which ends with the following reaffirmation of the basic position of our movement:

The Fourth International has shown that even with still very weak forces important results can be attained in building an International. By doggedly continuing to build their own parties and their own International, revolutionary Marxists feel that at the same time they are making the most effective contribution to creating the mass revolutionary Marxist International which is indispensable in bringing the enormous revolutionary potential that has now appeared to realization as victories.¹⁴

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Section V of the draft resolution on Latin America, "Situation of the Revolutionary Workers Movement and the General Lines of Orientation," seeks to indicate the attitude to be taken toward other currents in the broad revolutionary movement on the basis of the general tactical formula of technical preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period. The final paragraph indicates that it is "the job of the various national revolutionary Marxist organizations to translate this general orientation into concrete formulas and guidelines." However, having laid down a general tactical prescription for the entire continent, the draft resolution in reality has in advance fixed the tactics to be followed by all national sections, leaving up to them only the job of implementing the tactical formula on the local scene.

The tendency to lay down a blanket tactical prescription is so marked that the draft resolution even specifies in point 21 that "integration" into the "historic revolutionary current represented

by the Cuban revolution and the OLAS [and not by the Fourth International?] . . . involves, regardless of the forms, working as an integral part of the OLAS."¹⁵

As against this, the main resolution for the world congress states (in section VII):

The Cuban leadership's left turn between the Tricontinental Congress [conference] and the OLAS Conference created the possibility for a united front of all tendencies in the Latin-American revolutionary movement which agree with the general line of OLAS. The revolutionary Marxist forces have been able to take advantage of this possibility to broaden their field of action in countries like Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, Chile, and Guatemala.¹⁶

The main resolution speaks of the "possibility" for a "united front," of the "possibility" for revolutionary Marxists to "broaden their field of action." The draft resolution on Latin America specifies: "working as an integral part of the OLAS." The main resolution leaves open the tactical question; the subsidiary resolution closes the question.

The impression given by this is that just as the main orientation advanced in the draft resolution on Latin America appears to be an adaptation to the orientation of the Cubans at their present level of development, so the prescription of working as an "integral part" of the OLAS appears to be an adaptation to the organizational level they have reached.

To make an organizational adaptation of this kind could have very serious consequences for the Latin American sections of the Trotskyist movement, whose problem is precisely the one indicated in the main resolution—to doggedly continue "to build their own parties and their own International." In what way becoming an "integral part" of the OLAS would help in building "their own parties and their own International" is hard to say. All the more so in view of the fact that the draft resolution itself notes in point 20 that the Castroist tendency "has not developed any important degree of organization and in fact the OLAS likewise has not succeeded either in finding a solution to the problem of crystallizing and consolidating organized new vanguards."

In the absence of a series of political and organizational prerequisites, to make the kind of sweeping organizational commitment proposed by the draft resolution is unsound. It would be wiser, one would think, to leave the field of relations

with OLAS open, simply indicating, as the main resolution does, the possibility of united fronts and a wider field of common action, a position that accords with the reality.

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The inversion in the document by which tactics and technique are placed above political strategy leads to a deficiency in an area where the draft resolution could possibly have offered some very helpful suggestions for the coming period. In the two final paragraphs of section V, for instance, after stating that elaboration of the continental strategy "outlined elsewhere in this document" must be done in correspondence with "the concrete needs and potential of each country or group of countries at a given stage," the document states that this "also implies the need for a political program" of a transitional nature. The document does not deal with this need in a concrete way at all. The next sentence states that it is up to "the various national revolutionary Marxist organizations to translate this general orientation into concrete formulas and guidelines." It is true that there is some ambiguity here as to whether this refers to the continental strategy of preparing for and engaging in rural guerrilla war, to the problem of a transitional political program, or to a combination of the two. In point 18, however, this is made clear: "The determination of the themes of a transitional program for each given stage is clearly the task of revolutionists in the various countries." The draft resolution on Latin America thus contributes exactly nothing, not even a suggestion, on the themes of a transitional political program for the immensely explosive situation facing our movement there.¹⁷

Of course, it is the task of revolutionists in the various countries to work out the themes of a transitional program for each stage. But it is still more their task to work out the tactics for each stage. Since tactics are dealt with in the draft resolution, are in fact its main preoccupation, the question arises, why is it silent as to possible transitional themes for the coming period? It would have been completely in the tradition and spirit of the Transitional Program adopted by the Fourth International in 1938 to have considered the question.

The answer appears to lie in the nature of the concept at the heart of the draft resolution. Once it has been decided that "the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare,

the term having primarily a geographical-military meaning," the question of transitional steps is narrowed to the extreme, becoming reduced even in the area of armed struggle. Even worse, the central concept of the Transitional Program drafted by Trotsky on the utilization of transitional slogans and transitional measures (including the field of armed struggle) to mobilize the masses and construct a combat party is hard to fit in with this "principal axis" if it can be fitted in at all.

The reasons for this are not difficult to discern. Trotsky's Transitional Program conceives the socialist revolution as carried forward by mass mobilizations, in the process of which a competent revolutionary leadership, organized in a combat party, is forged. The concept of rural guerrilla war as the principal axis for a prolonged period projects a small, heroic elite carrying on the battle in the absence of the masses and in areas remote from the cities. Thus if the concept of rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period is adopted as the principal axis of revolutionary work, then the problem of mobilizing the urban masses becomes somewhat irrelevant, and along with it most of the Transitional Program.

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This probably explains, too, why the resolution pays so little attention to the developments among the youth in the urban centers in 1968, particularly the explosion that occurred in a capital as important as Mexico City. The meaning of the events there deserves the most careful analysis, especially with regard to their significance for transitional themes that are immediately applicable in Mexico but are also worth studying for their possible bearing on similar or potentially similar struggles elsewhere in Latin America.

The May-June events in France clearly influenced the student masses and their allies in Mexico City, as the Mexican comrades have pointed out in their illuminating articles. Something of much deeper significance was also visible.

We have regarded the Cuban leaders as the first contingent of a new generation of revolutionists free from the crippling influence of the Stalinist movement. This was the main thing we hailed in the Cubans when they toppled the capitalist structure in Cuba. Arriving at revolutionary conclusions on the basis of their own thinking and their own experience, they were the harbingers of a great new development.

We are now witnessing a new phase of this process on a world scale. It became unmistakable several years ago with the appearance in the United States of the widespread and militant opposition among the youth to the war in Vietnam and the response this received internationally among the youth. That the youth themselves have tended to link this with the Cuban revolution and its leaders has been shown by many of the slogans they have advanced and the high regard in which they hold Fidel and especially Che.

The May-June events in France were clinching proof of the importance of this development and its broad scope. After this came further confirmation from Mexico City. In fact today there are few areas in the capitalist world that are unable to provide their share of evidence.

There is absolutely no escaping the conclusion that for the Fourth International the crucial question it faces is its capacity to sink roots politically and organizationally in *this* sector. This holds on an international scale, including Latin America, perhaps Latin America above all if the draft resolution is correct in its estimate that a prerevolutionary situation exists there on a continental scale.

So far as the strategy of our movement is concerned, the main characteristics of this thrust of the youth in a revolutionary direction are (1) its occurrence in urban centers, (2) its involvement of considerable masses, (3) its tendency to try to link up with the workers or other sectors of the masses and to draw them into action.

It thus follows that the problem of developing transitional slogans and measures to attract these forces to the Fourth International is an acute one. What does the draft resolution on Latin America contribute to help solve this problem in that sector of the world? The answer is, nothing.

If anything, it diverts attention from the key problem now facing the Fourth International. For in place of making a concrete contribution on such political questions as how to draw the masses of revolutionary-minded urban youth closer to the Trotskyist movement and how through them to come closer to the masses of urban workers, the draft resolution advances instead the idea of preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period primarily in the "geographical-military meaning" of the term.

Another point to consider is whether the central concept in the draft resolution on Latin America, namely, giving a "geographical-military" orientation priority over political strategy, can be logically confined to just one continent.

The Cubans have hardly viewed it that way, and certainly the tendencies immediately under their influence do not view it that way. They incline rather strongly to view it as an internationally valid orientation, except—perhaps—in the imperialist sector, about which they have little to say; and the sector of the degenerated or deformed workers' states, about which they have nothing at all to say so far as the struggle for a political revolution is concerned. It would be very difficult to find convincing arguments to persuade these currents that in the colonial world as a whole the tactic of preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period is valid only for Latin America.

In fact logic speaks for an opposite conclusion. If the draft resolution on Latin America were to be passed in its present form by the coming world congress, our movement would be hard put to explain why the orientation decided on as good for Latin America was considered to be bad for the rest of the colonial and semicolonial world. It would certainly be contended that such a position is inconsistent and that such a sharp geographical demarcation cannot reasonably be made.

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Still another consideration must be weighed. Under the title of "An Insufficient Document," Comrade Livio Maitan submitted for the international pregress discussion a letter which he wrote to the members of the United Secretariat on May 15, 1968, offering some criticisms of the first draft of the main resolution.¹⁸ He raised an important question in his letter which may have a bearing on the reason why the draft resolution on Latin America projects the orientation it does. Comrade Maitan points to the theoretical achievements and the theoretical strength of the Trotskyist movement. Then he turns to its organizational weakness and the problem of overcoming it:

But it is only by successes or revolutionary struggles at the head of a mass movement in one or several countries that we will be able to surmount our difficulties and present contradictions. What is expected from us from now on is that we demonstrate in practice the historical value

of our movement and we will be judged essentially on this basis. This can appear, at bottom, to be an elementary truth, but it is a question of inspiring our whole activity with this recognition. It is a question more precisely of determining in what countries we have the best chance of a breakthrough and subordinating everything to the elementary necessity for a success in these countries, and even, if necessary, in a single country. The rest will come later.

There are, in fact, several countries where we at present have possibilities for an important breakthrough (youth movement in France, antiwar movement and youth movement in the United States, South Africa with a certain time) and we must unquestionably make an effort in the direction of India, but we must place everything above all on a sector of Latin America and you know very well which one. We must exploit the preparatory period of the congress to convince the entire movement to operate in practice, every day, with this perspective. Permit me to express myself a little paradoxically: it is necessary to understand and to explain that at the present stage the International will be built around Bolivia.¹⁹

Comrade Maitan wrote this a few days after the battle of the barricades in Paris but before the mass mobilization in France had assumed such proportions as to create a revolutionary situation in which the Trotskyist youth succeeded in developing their initial openings into positions of key importance. That is why he says nothing about the meaning of the successes of the Trotskyist movement in France nor what this as well as the May-June events signified for the future of the Fourth International and the world revolution as a whole. "Parts" of his letter, he admits in his August 20 postscript, were "outmoded by events." Other parts, it should be added, were outmoded by changes in the first draft of the main resolution. Yet Comrade Maitan still thought that certain of his ideas remained valid. Leaving aside the points which he believes were not fully taken into consideration in reworking the main resolution and some other more or less secondary items, it would seem that the chief point on which his views remained unchanged by the events in France (and Mexico City) was the view expressed in the two paragraphs quoted above. Moreover, he considered this to be so important that he submitted his letter as part of the preparatory discussion for the coming world congress.

Comrade Maitan appears to believe that the fate of the Fourth International now hinges on a "breakthrough"; that if this breakthrough can be obtained, the "rest will come later"; that it is possible that such a breakthrough can be achieved in several places, the most promising at the moment being Bolivia. Hence, he

comes to a far-reaching conclusion: We "must place everything above all on a sector of Latin America. . . ." The preparatory period of the congress must be utilized to convince "the *entire movement* to operate in practice, every day, with this perspective" (emphasis added).

It would seem undeniable that the orientation proposed in the draft resolution on Latin America of preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period on a continental scale fits in completely logically with the view advanced by Comrade Maitan above. If we have interpreted correctly what he is saying, he contends that the entire Fourth International must now stake everything on securing and forwarding the material means to sustain rural guerrilla war in a selected country in Latin America. And if this is to be done effectively, the entire Fourth International must subordinate everything else to this task, including possible openings in other countries making different demands and requiring different tactics.

In short, the draft resolution on Latin America appears to have been drawn up on the basis of a quite different concept of the key problem facing the Fourth International and the orientation and tasks required to solve it than the concept expressed in the main resolution with its requisite orientation and tasks for the coming period. How the implicit contradiction between the two resolutions would be resolved in practice if both were adopted without either of them being substantially changed is hard to foresee.

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If we have misinterpreted Comrade Maitan's letter and read into it something which he does not hold, he will, of course, correct us. With this in mind, we venture to say that the essence of his position appears to us to be stated in the following sentence in his letter: "What is expected from us from now on is that we demonstrate in practice the historical value of our movement and we will be judged essentially on this basis." By "demonstrate in practice" he means that the Fourth International must achieve a "breakthrough" in the near future in "one or several countries."

There can be no question of the revolutionary sincerity of Comrade Maitan or his concern for the success of the Fourth International. His efforts to contribute with all his considerable abilities to achieving an organizational breakthrough is wholly in the tradition of our movement. Nevertheless, as we see it, he

puts the question of the practical test of the historical validity of the Trotskyist movement in too narrow a framework. If we were to apply this same criterion to the First, Second, or Third International, it would have to be concluded that all of them failed to meet the test of history.²⁰ Yet this is not the case, as we well know. The function of the International is to represent the long-range interests of the proletariat. The final judgment of the successive Internationals will come, after the class struggle is won, when it is estimated what they contributed to overthrowing capitalism and establishing socialism on a global scale. It is the function of the Fourth International to keep its sights fixed on this target and to measure the outcome of all the battles in the light of how they slow down or speed up final victory in the class war.

Looking at the function of the Fourth International in this way, it is a mistake to assume that it has a gun at its head, that it must produce an immediate "breakthrough," that it is under compulsion to comb the world for possibilities of meeting the demand in a hurry.

There is a very real danger under the impulse of such considerations that the movement can become overcommitted in an organizational way at a preselected point; and, by the very investment in this choice, become caught up in false hopes there while becoming partially blind to a very real opening in a completely unexpected area. The exact spots of revolutionary breakthroughs, historic experience has shown, are notoriously difficult to predict.

Several other unfavorable factors come into play when leaders of the International feel under compulsion to produce an immediate organizational success of major proportions. A tendency develops to underestimate the importance of small gains and successes which can quite realistically be achieved. In certain situations these can add up rather rapidly to give political prestige and weight to a section of the movement. Disregarded because they are obviously not large or individually impressive compared to what one feels under compulsion to produce, the section can stagnate and never get beyond the most primitive of beginnings organizationally,

A compulsion of this kind also makes it more difficult to make a timely retreat when it is called for. The stupidities this can lead to are illustrated by the headline in a recent issue of *Granma*: "Retreat: A Word Eradicated from the Dictionary."²¹ The journalist who composed that headline forgot, for some reason, that

retreat has not been eradicated from tactics and strategy in either war or politics.

Similarly the movement can become trapped in a commitment much beyond its organizational resources. When the inevitable accounting comes, the result can be demoralization of the cadres, who feel cheated of even the modest successes that might have been achieved had a more realistic course been followed.

This would be one of the grave dangers facing the Fourth International if it were to commit the whole movement to concentrating on the gamble of a breakthrough in a selected country by means of preparation of and engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period. The disproportion between the material resources available to the Fourth International and what is required to mount such a venture is very great. The Fourth International has access neither to sources of heavy financial support like those at the disposal of the July 26 Movement nor the means available to a leadership holding state power. The risk of a major defeat for the Fourth International would be correspondingly high; the chances for a breakthrough by means of this tactic correspondingly low. It should be added that if the Fourth International did have such resources it would be well advised to employ them along other lines much more likely to bring an early success in the current world situation.

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In order to avoid any possible misunderstanding, we stress the following points:

1. It is completely correct and, in fact, highly productive to mobilize the entire international Trotskyist movement around single situations or single issues. Three examples can be cited from recent experience: (a) The international campaign in behalf of Hugo Blanco. (b) The attempt to coordinate antiwar demonstrations on an international scale. (c) The help secured for the French comrades in the May-June events.

What is to be particularly noted in these three instances was the way the campaigns helped the national sections which engaged in them.

2. The same holds for mobilizing aid for a national section under heavy repression. Financial aid, in particular, must be sought to help sustain the key cadres and keep them functioning. Any number of instances of this could be cited from the history of the Fourth International. It is a perennial problem but also a

perennial opportunity to build and reinforce the ties of international solidarity that bind the movement together.

3. A section of the Fourth International may find that at a certain stage of the revolutionary process in its country, it is necessary and productive to engage in guerrilla war, as a specific form of armed struggle. The proviso is that it be conceived as a tactic entailed by political considerations, not as a new-found formula guaranteeing quick or certain success, and that it be within the means available to the section. This holds, it should be added, not only for Latin America but for similar areas elsewhere.

Finally, in view of the differences that have emerged over the relative place of guerrilla war as a tactic, it would be well to examine the question more specifically in relation to the Transitional Program. Our movement has already recognized that in certain countries, under certain circumstances, guerrilla war can play a positive role. However, it has not analyzed the negative consequences of guerrilla war if it is attempted in countries, or under circumstances, where it is out of place. Experience would now seem to testify rather heavily for the conclusion that while the appearance of guerrillas can signify a sharp rise in the class struggle, it can also mark a phase of decline, in which case it must be judged as a sign of despair and desperation, one of the symptoms of defeat.

As a consciously applied tactic, guerrilla war would seem to come under the sections of the Transitional Program dealing with the arming of the proletariat and the linkup between the proletariat and the peasantry.

A critical study of the varied experience with guerrilla war in a whole series of countries would be extremely useful to put this tactic in better perspective, to relate it properly to political strategy, and to counteract the rather widespread tendency to elevate it into a universal formula and even a panacea.

Report on the 1969 World Congress of the Fourth International

I'm going to report on the Third Congress since the Reunification Congress was held in 1963—or, if you figure from 1938, the Ninth Congress since the Fourth International was founded.

The size of the congress has been indicated in the public report published in *Intercontinental Press*—around a hundred delegates and observers, representing about thirty different countries.¹ It was fairly representative, therefore, of the status of the Trotskyist movement at this stage in quite a few areas. Some places were not represented for reasons that we do not know—maybe a breakdown in travel arrangements, or for other reasons of that kind.

The congress lasted for about a week, and still did not complete its agenda. Several important points had to be held over because there simply was not time in that brief period of one week to discuss all the points that needed to be taken up.

The subjects included the general resolution, which the delegates referred to as “the Theses,” which covered the political situation in the world since the last congress—bringing things up to date; a special resolution on Latin America, which proposed an orientation; and another document, in fact, two documents, which made an estimate of the Cultural Revolution in China. Then a very important resolution and discussion on the youth movement as it has developed in the past few years throughout the world;

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and finally, a report on the activities of the Fourth International.

In comparison with the previous two congresses, that is, the Reunification Congress and the congress in 1965, there was one notable difference. At the Reunification Congress there was complete agreement so far as the principled basis of the reunification was concerned. I should explain that just before the Reunification Congress, a Seventh World Congress had been held which was marked by an extremely sharp fight between Pablo on the one hand, and those who supported his position—he was the former secretary of the Fourth International—and those who disagreed with his positions as they had developed up to that point—who were led by Livio Maitan, Pierre Frank, and Ernest Mandel. The Seventh Congress ended and then the Reunification Congress opened.²

Following the Reunification Congress, Pablo split from the Fourth International. I won't go into the issues on which that occurred, but simply record the fact that a split did occur, after the Reunification Congress, a rather small one. Then came the Second Congress after the Reunification (or Eighth Congress), the main task of which was to consolidate the reunification, as it had existed over a period of two years, and in the face of the split by Pablo. So there were no major differences recorded at that congress.

Now the present congress was different. We had some differences. I'll go into these in a moment, their nature, and what they might mean.

First, I should like to just indicate something of our general attitude toward the Fourth International, which we unfortunately cannot legally be members of, and say something about the role we have played in building the Fourth International. We were instrumental—that is, our leaders of that time, in 1938 and earlier, were instrumental—together with Leon Trotsky, in creating and founding the Fourth International. And ever since that time, we have done our utmost to build the Fourth International, to help it in every possible way. Since the beginning of the Trotskyist movement, our leaders have consciously opposed any tendency to fall into any kind of narrow, isolationist attitude. And because of this long tradition in our movement, the Socialist Workers Party has always had an attitude toward the problems of building an International that could be said to be among the very best.

One of the things we have always held to—very consciously—was not to try to assume leadership of the International. We viewed our position, and our role, and our function, even though

we were the most powerful sector of the movement for many years, as that of offering support—helping and supporting the key leaders but not substituting for them and not trying to assume the leadership.

Over that long period, there was only one big split with serious consequences, if we leave aside the split in the SWP in 1939-40.³ In 1953, a split occurred which lasted for ten years. In our opinion, this was not our responsibility. It was due to a series of very bad errors that were committed at that time by the leadership of the International under Pablo. It was aggravated by the fact that McCarthyism, which raged at that time in the United States, prevented us from being able to give a clear picture to the International of our positions on certain items; and a series of misunderstandings arose as a result of that. These were finally overcome, and we had the reunification of 1963.

Two points should be noted in this reunification, because we felt them in the present congress. One was that at the Reunification Congress we reached an agreement to leave the assessment of the differences of 1953 to a time in the future when we could discuss them in an educational way without any heat. We did not think it advisable at the time to undertake an assessment of who was right and who was wrong in 1953 and the following years. We thought it best to leave that discussion to a period when it could be viewed in the proper, historic perspective, and with the balance sheet drawn in a way that would eliminate any factional heat due to factional hangovers. All of us agreed on that.

The other thing was that in 1963, certain differences on the question of China had to be considered. We had reached agreement on all the other major questions in the world as we saw them at that time, with the exception of China. Here it turned out that during the years of the split the comrades who were under the International Secretariat had not taken the same position as we had in the Socialist Workers Party, and in the International Committee, with which we had fraternal relations, on the question of China. They did not believe in the necessity of a political revolution.⁴ That was the key point, so we had some discussion on that question, and we reached an agreement that what we would do was use a formula that included the substance of calling for a political revolution in China, but without naming it as such. That was the agreement that was reached in 1963.⁵

Since then, that is, during the Cultural Revolution, the comrades who were formerly with the International Secretariat came to the conclusion that it was correct to call for a political

revolution. They came to this conclusion after Mao had come out for a political revolution in China. We thought that this was a progressive step on their part, and that it might lead to a still closer approximation of the positions that had existed before the Reunification Congress. And that's the way things stood as the congress was being prepared.

Now, as to the documents and the discussion that occurred on them at the congress. First on the Theses, the general political resolution, which is called "The New Rise of the World Revolution." I won't go into this very much, because it will be published, as finally edited, in a coming issue of *Intercontinental Press*.⁶ Briefly, what it did was to bring up to date all the major happenings in the three sectors of the world revolution,⁷ pointing to the importance of Vietnam, and what Vietnam had done in rearousing the colonial world and contributing to a new upsurge in the other sectors. The Theses dealt with the events in Czechoslovakia, indicating the deepgoing tendency in the deformed or degenerated workers' states toward a political revolution. It took up what has been happening in the advanced countries, particularly in France with the explosion of May-June 1968, and how this has accelerated the revolutionary process in Europe, with repercussions all over the entire world. The United States was included, the Theses dealing with the Black liberation struggle and the political explosion on the campuses, and how this has contributed to a completely new mood in the United States and opened up great new possibilities for the revolutionary movement. The general conclusion of the Theses, put briefly, was that what has been happening in the past period, that is, since 1965, is an overcoming of the defeats of the previous period, the big ones in places like Brazil and Indonesia.⁸ A shift is occurring toward the classical revolutionary norms, and since the word "classical" may not be the best in this instance, let me explain what is meant by this.

It means that the pattern of revolution as we have seen it in China or Cuba or other places in the colonial world where the peasantry have played a very big role, where the cities, and the city masses, seem to have been rather quiescent, or able to play only a secondary role, has now changed, or is changing. What we are witnessing is the resumption of the key role of cities; that is, the key role of the urban masses, and in particular the working class. This signifies that there are greater possibilities now of revolutions occurring somewhat on the pattern of the Russian revolution, in which a party is required of the Leninist type. This

now becomes more and more the probability. This was the general conclusion of the Theses.

There were contributions in the discussion from various areas, some of which were of particular interest—one from Pakistan, for example, which pointed out what had been happening there in the weeks just before the congress, where for the first time a student rebellion, spreading over the country, had succeeded in bringing down a government administration, and ousting one dictator even though he was replaced probably by one not much different. This was symptomatic of the times.

And there were some interesting contributions from India on the problems that they face there, and particularly on the role of Maoism, not as a revolutionary force but as an obstacle to the building of a revolutionary movement. Other significant contributions were made from a number of areas. There was general agreement on this resolution, although, of course, not all the formulations met with unanimous approval. There were differences on some of these.

I come to the question of Latin America—the resolution around which the sharpest differences appeared at the congress. I'll go into that at greater length, one reason being that I was more directly involved in that than in some of the other discussions.

There was general agreement on the first part of the resolution, which describes the conditions in Latin America as being prerevolutionary, almost revolutionary, or at least of explosive proportions over the entire continent. This situation has existed, in my opinion, in Latin America for about ten years or more, so that there was really nothing new in this, beyond recording how difficult it is becoming for the oligarchies in Latin America and their American backers to keep the lid on the situation.

The differences arose over what conclusions should be drawn from this general situation in the way of advancing the revolution. Thus the differences concerned the question of strategy in the revolutionary struggle. Our view on this question was that what was proposed—namely, guerrilla war—can be taken as either a tactical or a strategic question. If it is taken as a tactical question, then the use of guerrilla warfare ought to be decided by each section and fitted into a broader strategy. For example, if the Peruvian Trotskyists think that it would advance the revolutionary process in Peru to engage in guerrilla warfare this is a tactical problem for them to decide in relation to their overall problem of constructing a combat party capable of leading a

revolution to success. But if guerrilla warfare is not viewed that way, but is viewed as a strategy—that is, a new way of carrying out a revolution—then the Leninist concept of constructing a combat party as the main strategic task is put into question, and we disagree with that. This, then, ought to become the axis of the discussion—the question of whether or not guerrilla warfare could be accepted as a strategy. Our view on this was shared by other comrades there—India, for example.

The opposing thesis, that of the comrades who maintain that rural guerrilla warfare should be adopted as a continental strategy for a prolonged period, is linked with a certain view of where the Fourth International stands, and what the possibilities are facing the Fourth International. The view is something like this: the Fourth International has great prestige because of its political and theoretical capacities, but it remains small organizationally. At the same time it is confronted with tremendous revolutionary possibilities, particularly in a place like Latin America, and everything now hinges on the possibility of these small forces engaging in the struggle in such a way as to make a breakthrough.

This view was expressed most eloquently by Livio Maitan in a letter which was published in the internal bulletin. Everything hinges, according to this view, on whether or not the Fourth International can make a breakthrough, particularly in Latin America, but also anywhere it may be possible. Once such a breakthrough is made—the Trotskyists coming to power in a country like Peru or Bolivia or Ecuador, or a place like that, or becoming a major party in a place like France—then everything else will follow; because the old charge that the Trotskyists can talk, and theorize, and argue well about politics and all that sort of thing, but can't organize—that will fall to the ground.

Our position was that the situation is certainly ripe enough. This has been shown over and over again—the ripeness of the situation in country after country, throughout the world, and it would take a very long list to name all the places—but what is needed for the Fourth International to forge ahead in a big way is more forces. You cannot leap over yourself; more forces are required, even in those areas where the opportunities are greatest. As a matter of fact, that is where you need them the most. This boils down then to the old question of party building, building a combat party. That's what we tried to maintain and to present at the congress as observers.

We forecast, in our arguments, that in Latin America the revolutionary struggle would tend to shift to the urban centers, and we cited as one of the first examples of that trend what happened in Santo Domingo. And then, of course, the way the United States responded to that.

The contention of the comrades of the opposing view was that the struggle will continue to be mainly in the rural areas, not because there's anything better about the rural areas, but simply that it is easier for guerrillas to survive in a rural area than it is in a city area.

We posed against the orientation concentrating on the preparation of guerrilla war, an orientation toward the youth, that is, toward those sectors of the population which have shown by their own actions that they are drawing revolutionary conclusions and tending to move into action. We maintained that this orientation was valid for Latin America as well as for other parts of the world.

The opposite position was that we should orient toward engaging in military preparations for rural guerrilla war on a continental scale, no matter how small the forces might be in any given country.

Our conclusion was that what this line of argumentation implied was an adaptation to the limitations of the Cuban leadership. And I'll go into this to indicate precisely what we meant by that, so as to avoid any possible misunderstanding.

They, of course, denied that they were adapting at all to the Cubans. Instead, they held that if any conclusion was to be drawn it was that we were under the influence of the peace movement in the United States and that we were continuing in the tradition of "commentary" politics; that we comment and do not engage in action.

I got the impression that some of the comrades who took this view tended to divide the European Trotskyist movement as it was and as it stands now along the following lines: that there was a bad past in which the Trotskyists were engaged in entryism⁹—that was in Europe—and there was a bad past in the United States, in which the Trotskyists engaged in commentary politics. Fortunately at the present time in France they have overcome the stage of entryism, but it appears that in the United States we have not yet overcome the stage of commentary politics. Only one or two comrades expressed it that clearly on the floor. These comrades had the position that the Fourth International should stop living in the shadow of Stalinism and on its

mistakes, and strike out boldly, with new tactics and vigorous actions.

In considering the limitations of the Cuban leaders, some points were brought out at the congress which have not been discussed before. Our view on the Cubans as we presented it at the congress was that the Cubans made an enormous breakthrough in their revolution. They succeeded in gaining a victory due to the default of the Communist Party and the fact that they, as a young generation of revolutionaries, refused to follow the Communist Party and struck out on their own. Under the peculiarities of the situation in Cuba at that time, they succeeded, through guerrilla warfare and its development, in gaining power. This was their great positive achievement. But this very achievement, in the peculiar form in which it occurred, also tended to set the subsequent course of this leadership along lines which they have not yet transcended.

First of all, in Cuba they utilized the Communist Party. They dismantled it, tried to put it together and make something new out of it. It was like using old bricks in a new building. They found the Cuban CP useful in this respect.

Then, in extending the Cuban revolution, thereby defending Cuba in the most effective way, they sought to repeat the Cuban pattern, that is, the pattern of the Cuban revolution. They sought to utilize the Communist parties in other parts of Latin America.

After a time, this effort to utilize the Communist parties in Latin America ended up in a real faction fight, because the Cubans, in utilizing the Communist parties, did not try to build a combat party in any of these countries; instead they tried to utilize the Communist parties to build guerrilla forces. This proved not to be successful. So they ended up in a factional struggle with the CPs, in which the key issue became armed struggle versus peaceful coexistence.

On that issue, of course, all of us were on the Cuban side—against the concept of peaceful coexistence.

The faction struggle ended in a split with the important Venezuelan CP, and this was codified more or less at the OLAS conference in 1967. Here, one of the limitations of the Cubans showed up, that in splitting with the Venezuelan CP, they did not make any political accounting—no political accounting over what the role of Stalinism was. And they sort of buried the whole thing and ended up in a very small minority. Because of their incorrect political course, the Cubans ended up with a small minority not only in Venezuela but elsewhere in Latin America. Nowhere did

they succeed in building, or putting together, forces of a size and quality capable of carrying out a revolution on the pattern of the Cuban revolution, or any other pattern.

At the OLAS conference, they projected a new course—that they would work with anybody. We interpreted that to mean, well, “anybody,” that includes Trotskyists. How else would you designate Trotskyists from the Cuban viewpoint?

The defeat of Che Guevara followed that. It had a dampening effect on the whole Cuban line and its implementation. At the OLAS conference the OLAS had a definite structure, had a definite set of rules, and was projected as a definite organization. And if you’ll recall what was said at the time, it was projected that the OLAS might even constitute the core of a new International. This appeared in different newspapers and magazines written by people who had very close contact with the Cuban leadership. Such an article appeared in *Ramparts*, for example.¹⁰ But Che’s defeat had a dampening effect, and the OLAS began to wither. It eventually became more and more reduced, until at the congress, the comrades who were closest to the situation in Latin America said, “OLAS does not exist. What does exist is a number of currents, or tendencies, who more or less agree on the necessity of armed struggle, or guerrilla warfare, who come under the general designation of OLAS, and that’s all that remains.”

Despite these bitter experiences, the line of the Cuban leaders—and this is primarily at the present time the course and the line of Fidel Castro—remains rural guerrilla warfare on a continental scale over a prolonged period. That’s their line. But our assessment of it—we’re talking now of the assessment we made at the congress in presenting a minority view—is that it is more difficult today to repeat that pattern than it was in 1958 and 1959. The enemy, that is, the imperialist enemy, has learned a bit, and there has been a series of defeats which have had their effect in Latin America.

In presenting these views, we asked, or rather called, for a drawing of a balance sheet on the whole experience of guerrilla warfare, as to what conclusions could be drawn from it, its weaknesses, whatever positive qualities it has, how far it should be included in the program of the Fourth International, just what assessment should be made of it.

In the process of this discussion, we brought up the question of Che Guevara and the lessons to be learned from the defeat of his undertaking in Bolivia. We drew some rather sharp political conclusions concerning Che Guevara’s course in Bolivia.

First of all, we talked about Che Guevara as a symbol. He really is a very admirable figure. He is an admirable figure to all youth who are inclined in a revolutionary direction. He caught their imagination. For one thing, he was a man of action. That's a type of revolutionist coming into increasing prominence—revolutionists of action. Che Guevara's dedication is particularly impressive. He was second or third in the leadership of Cuba, had enormous prestige, an assured government career. He gave that up. He gave up his wife, his children—everything. He gave up all this in order to dedicate himself to a struggle that was very hazardous, a difficult, hard struggle. No wonder he caught the admiration of the youth everywhere. We share this feeling about Che Guevara. We share it very deeply, because to us, he's our kind. We're the kind who dedicate ourselves in the same way, really dedicate our lives to the revolution.

At the same time, we have to make an estimate of him politically, of what he did politically, and what happened politically.

First of all, on the points where we agree with Che Guevara.

We agree with Che Guevara on his overall goal of revolutionary socialism. But we disagree with him that this can be precipitated at any given moment by the will of a revolutionary.

We agree with him on the concept that the best aid that can be given to the Vietnamese revolution would be to create two, three, many Vietnams. But we disagree with him on its being possible to do this through the action of a small group that decides in a selected country that it will precipitate a Vietnam there.

We agree with Che Guevara on his internationalism, and particularly with his concept that the best way to defend Cuba is by extending the revolution. Here we disagree with him on one simple thing. We disagree with his concept that a revolution can be exported. In saying this we are taking into consideration more what he tried to do than what he may have said on this point. That's what he actually tried to do in Bolivia—export a revolution.

We agree with him on his opposition to Stalinism. What we disagree with him on is how to oppose Stalinism. Our concept is that in opposing Stalinism, we must work this out through political confrontation with Stalinism, through the elaboration of differences with Stalinism, through the assessment of the historical experience with Stalinism, so that the whole development of Stalinism and its meaning becomes understood to the core. It's not enough simply to be anti-Stalinist. Much more is required.

We agree with him in his opposition to the politics of peaceful coexistence. Our alternative to that policy is to construct a combat party in the Leninist tradition, and what we stress is the importance of political leadership.

We did not take up the technical side of Che Guevara's operation in Bolivia, simply indicating that on this very little has been said by experts. Fidel Castro only went so far as to say that Che Guevara had a tendency sometimes to be much too bold in these operations; but he might have meant that in the sense of throwing himself personally into sectors of the battle where he could easily have been killed.

What we were concerned about was Che's political errors. And these were listed as follows:

First, he assumed that a particular situation in Bolivia followed directly from a general situation on a continental scale. If all of Latin America is in an explosive condition and if the whole situation is prerevolutionary, then if you look at Bolivia, you must say that Bolivia is the weakest link in Latin America. And you can list all the reasons why it should be the weakest link. But what Che left out in making this estimate was that there are also ups and downs within a particular country, and that it becomes very, very important in a revolutionary struggle to know when the movement is actually rising among the masses, and when it is declining. This involves the question of timing—when to throw yourself into action, how to conduct yourself, what slogans to raise, what actions to engage in. This takes us to the next point.

Second, Che Guevara left out the timing in relation to the Bolivian class struggle. Timing is a crucial question in an important revolutionary action. I should say that it's also a very difficult question for even a revolutionary party to determine. We know that from the Bolshevik experience. It is very difficult for even a revolutionary party to determine precisely the moods of the masses, the exact extent that they're moving forward, and to be able from this knowledge to undertake the correct action at the correct moment. It does not follow directly from a general situation and it requires a party in order to determine it. Che had no party. His timing was conceived in the light of a general continental situation and on the objective need to help the Vietnamese and to defend the Cuban revolution, not on a direct and immediate appreciation of Bolivian realities.

To be noted in this conjunction was his belief that a revolution can be precipitated through the action of a small force, even from the outside, because most of the people whom he brought into

Bolivia in the beginning were from the outside. This whole approach of Che Guevara in this situation resembled a sectarian approach. Preconceived ideas. The general situation is explosive, you've got to help the Vietnamese, and the revolution can be precipitated by a small force. He proceeded almost dogmatically. He formed his concept of the situation in Bolivia in much the way sectarians do.

His third political mistake was that in place of relying on a combat party, in place of constructing that, or having it available to him in Bolivia, he depended on a very treacherous ally. In the first place, you shouldn't depend on an ally, any ally at all; you should have your own forces. But he didn't have his own forces—political forces—and he had to depend on an ally. And the ally was a very treacherous one—it was the Bolivian CP. Even with the Bolivian CP, his political preparations were inadequate. He did not work out his alliance with the Bolivian CP carefully. What he should have done, since they were treacherous, was to have a showdown with them in advance, before the operation was even engaged in. He had to have this showdown with them in order to determine how reliable they might be when the fighting began. It was absolutely essential for the success of his guerrilla operation in Bolivia to have good connections with the miners, and to have good connections with the masses in the cities, particularly in La Paz.

The fact that he did not undertake this showdown, but simply engaged in the action, made it much easier for the Bolivian Stalinists to shift their differences with Che Guevara from a political level—that is, the difference between the line of peaceful coexistence or armed struggle—to shift it from the political level to organizational questions, which happens nearly always in a factional fight with an unprincipled group. They raised the organizational question against him. They were all for what he did, but they had organizational differences with him. First of all, they accused him of a lack of consultation. And, of course, they had a point there. He did not consult them about the operation. Next, they raised the question of who should have command. That's not a very good question to debate because it involves personal qualifications and the whole thing gets lowered to a very vulgar level. The Stalinists did this very deliberately to avoid the main political question. It was an error to permit this kind of a situation to develop.

Che Guevara's fourth error, which I have already referred to, was to begin an armed action without a political party or even a

nucleus of a party either in the countryside or the city. He did not even have any ties with the Trotskyists, who had a certain connection with the masses both in La Paz and in the mines, and he did not have any connections with the peasants, or any organized political forces in the countryside, so that when he began his action, he was faced with a situation in which if the peasants did not rally immediately to his cause, then he would have to substitute for them. So he fell into a position where a small force substitutes for the masses, or tries to substitute for them. I'm quite sure that in the writings of Che Guevara you can find statements against this, against any substitution for the masses, statements that certain preconditions are required for guerrilla warfare; but the fact is that this is what he fell into in Bolivia.

His fifth error was that he made no advance political preparation among the peasants of any kind. Not the slightest of any kind whatsoever. Party or no party, simply no kind of preparation whatsoever with the peasants. So they were taken completely by surprise. All of a sudden, here are these guerrilla fighters, and it takes them some time to estimate this, and to judge what it may mean. Precious time was lost by that while the enemy mobilized.

Then, his sixth mistake was to underestimate the will, the readiness, and the technical capacities of the CIA and the Pentagon to initiate countermeasures against him. This he badly underestimated. They, on the other hand, did not underestimate him at all. When they learned about his action, we now know, they held a top-level meeting in Washington, involving all the forces around Johnson—the Pentagon, the CIA, the State Department. All their top men were involved with all their connections in Bolivia, their vast resources, technical apparatus, and we don't know how many millions of dollars were spent. They estimated Che Guevara as being a very serious person, one who required their special attention. In other words, they had a better appreciation of him than he had of them. That's a bad mistake for a political person to make. You've got to estimate the enemy very, very carefully.

His seventh error was to choose a position—and this involves a technical side, too—where it was difficult to break out or to receive aid. It may have been a very good area to practice the technique of guerrilla warfare, but it wasn't very good to receive aid, or to break out of. And he was actually caught when he tried to break out of that place. So this choice made it easier for the

counterforces to isolate him when the peasants did not rally immediately, as he had hoped they would.

If we summarize all these errors, we come to the following general conclusion about them: that Che Guevara put guerrilla technique—armed-struggle technique—above politics. He put military action above party building. And I think that this is incontrovertible, that this is what he actually did.

The conclusion to be drawn from this, remembering that Che Guevara is a very important advocate and practitioner of guerrilla warfare, is that first of all, guerrilla warfare does not stand up as a general strategy, however well it may fit in as a tactic in certain situations when it is used by a well-constructed combat party.

A second conclusion to be drawn from this experience is that it presented fresh proof that the struggle in Latin America has become more difficult and requires a better instrument than previously—it requires the construction of a combat party to a much greater degree than, say, in 1958 or 1959.

Here's how the comrades of the opposing position answered these arguments. They agreed with the criticisms of Che! A few seemed doubtful or hesitant, but the key comrades on the other side agreed with all these criticisms of Che, and even said that they had made the same criticisms themselves, as long as a year and a half ago, in a meeting of the International Executive Committee.¹¹ They only disagreed on one point—they disagreed that it was an outside enterprise for Che to come to Bolivia. They didn't agree with that. Perhaps this flows from the concept that Latin America is one country, with the same main language, facing the same general problems. On that basis they would be right in saying that it was not an outside enterprise.

But they did not elaborate. They maintained that despite the errors of Che, the concept of guerrilla warfare still remains valid. And, of course, anyone who practices it now will profit from this experience and won't make those kinds of errors. The concept still remains valid. They drew the same conclusion for the defeats of the guerrilla struggles in Peru, for example, under Luis de la Puente, and Guillermo Lobatón.¹² The same for Venezuela, and the same for Guatemala. Wherever there has been a defeat for the guerrilla struggle, it was a misapplication of the concept. The concept still remains valid. Also, they agreed on the need for a party. They maintained that the only way you can build a party in Latin America today is through practicing or preparing for guerrilla warfare.

The vote on this resolution was two to one in favor of the comrades who favored the guerrilla war strategy. One-third of the delegates were against it. We had to ask ourselves what this represented. Our conclusion was that this represented a feeling, or a mood, or a conclusion on the part of the Latin American Trotskyists, in combination with a similar attitude among a goodly sector of the French youth. The French youth are emerging from the experience of entryism, which they are much against; they do not have a long experience in party building and they are heavily influenced by the whole general aura surrounding Guevara, the deep sympathy for Guevara, and the attempts to practice Guevarism in the advanced countries as well as in the more backward countries. They are heavily under this influence. So it was this combination or the agreement between them and the Latin American comrades that was registered at the congress.

I should add that not all the Latin American comrades agree with this perspective. Some of the comrades in Argentina were opposed to putting the strategy of guerrilla warfare above the strategy of party building. The Argentines split about a year and a half ago, almost down the middle, and this appears to have been one of the key issues, although it was unstated. And the comrades who were rather opposed to adopting guerrilla warfare along these lines engaged in a split in which it was very difficult for anyone outside Argentina to determine who was in the majority. So these comrades, seemingly in a minority, according to the report of the United Secretariat representative, did not carry full weight at the congress. There may be other comrades in Latin America, too, whose analysis of guerrilla warfare is more or less the same as ours.

But I should say that it's a very real problem, and a difficult one to handle, because of the stand of the Cubans on this question, and because of the fact that it has become a key issue in the differences between Stalinism and the revolutionary current, being posed as armed struggle versus peaceful coexistence. In this conflict guerrilla war was identified with armed struggle, although it is only a specific form of armed struggle. This complicated things since a critical attitude toward the strategy of guerrilla warfare was easily misinterpreted as being identical to the position of the Stalinists.

The next point is the Cultural Revolution. Here we were faced with a strange situation. We had two documents, which originated from one document. The original draft was one we prepared at the request of the comrades on the United Secretariat. Despite

the great amount of work we have here, we agreed to do this. The document was sent to the United Secretariat. The majority of the comrades there agreed on a number of changes. This, of course, was their right since what they wanted from us was a first draft. When the changed document came back, we were rather surprised at the extent of the changes and the nature of the changes. Looking them over very carefully, bearing in mind our entire experience of analyzing the Chinese revolution, and recalling the differences that had existed before 1963, it appeared to us that the document now reflected a differing way of looking at the Cultural Revolution and at China, and that back of the changes loomed some rather large questions: How do you estimate Maoism? What kind of danger is it? To what degree is Maoism the same as Stalinism? A whole series of question like that appeared to be involved although they showed up only in the form of changes and amendments.¹³

We put the two documents column by column, and ran off copies of the two documents that way, so that the changes could be studied more easily. But our delegation forgot them, and we only had a dozen or so. Thus the comrades at the congress did not have the benefit of seeing them side by side.

This confronted us with a considerable difficulty in bringing out precisely what these differences were and what they signified. One of the delegates there made a wisecrack that all that was involved was a "marital dispute between the Europeans and the Americans." Everybody laughed at that. Who wanted to get involved in a marital dispute? Naturally there was a tendency on the part of many comrades to say, "Well, this is just hair-splitting; let's not get involved in it."

The report for the majority was given by Livio Maitan.¹⁴ My impression of his report was that it was rather general and intended primarily for publication. I could not follow all the details of it as he gave it, but I see from the document itself that it has thirty-six footnotes. I can't remember any previous report so well supplied with footnotes. I mention this because in my opinion the report appeared to avoid the differences that faced the congress. This made it especially difficult for the reporter for the minority to try to bring out the meaning of the differences. He had to start from scratch, take the two documents, and try to show what was involved by singling out instances which by themselves might not really mean much, such as whether to say "Stalinized Chinese Communist Party" or just "Chinese Communist Party." That was not easy.

We had two other minority reports. One was made by Comrade P'eng,¹⁵ who made a very good presentation of his viewpoint. The gist of it was that he considered the minority document to be all right so far as the record was concerned, but that it missed the main problem, which was how to intervene actively in the dispute between the Liu Shao-ch'i wing and the Maoist wing of the bureaucracy.¹⁶ His position was for intervention on the side of Liu Shao-ch'i, whom he considered to be a kind of Khrushchevist. Khrushchevism should be regarded as having two aspects, Comrade P'eng explained. On the one hand, it is more crassly opportunistic than Stalin would ever indicate in language. On the other hand, it stands for de-Stalinization. What we ought to support, critically, is the trend toward de-Stalinization. This was the reason Comrade P'eng gave for intervening on the side of Liu Shao-ch'i.

Then we had a report by Comrade Capa of Argentina,¹⁷ who was also for an active policy of intervention in China, but he tended to be for intervention on the side of Mao. His difficulty was that there's a real problem of Maoism among guerrilla fighters in certain parts of Latin America, and he's against Maoism. Thus it was not easy for him to draw a line of separation.

One of the most interesting positions was the one advanced by Ernest Germain.¹⁸ He tried to bring out that the area of agreement between the two documents was much more fundamental than the disagreements; that actually the two documents were almost the same so far as the points of agreement were concerned. He listed these as follows:

First of all, both sides agreed that what we have before us is a deformed workers' state in China.

Secondly, that a political revolution is required.

Thirdly, both sides agree that the Cultural Revolution was a consequence of an intrabureaucratic struggle. A split occurred over differences within the bureaucracy.

But in the process of this struggle the masses were mobilized. This was number four in the points of agreement, that there was a mass mobilization in China. And this mass mobilization had the effect, number five, of weakening the bureaucracy.

Finally, the sixth point, Maoism is alien to Marxism.

On all these points we have substantial agreement and we really should not have two documents before us, in the opinion of Comrade Germain.

The changes that they made in the original document, accord-

ing to him, were either editorial changes, small changes, which we would probably agree to; or, number two, they added certain points to explain the objective reasons for the Cultural Revolution.

If you look at the two documents, you'll see a series of points listing a number of contradictions to be seen in Chinese society. These contradictions led to the explosion known as the Cultural Revolution.

Comrade P'eng made a good point on one of these—the contradiction between the population explosion and the limitation of resources available for this exploding population. He said that this could have been said for the last hundred years in China. And the same for many other countries in the colonial world, and this didn't explain the reasons for the Cultural Revolution in particular.

The third point that Ernest made was changes in statements of fact. He had the impression that the first draft of the resolution implied that there had been a military take-over and they had rectified this to indicate that there had not been a military take-over, even though the military had grown stronger.

The fourth change was to repeat formulas which were used at the Reunification Congress to the effect that Peking comes closer to revolutionary positions than Moscow does. This point was discussed by some of the comrades at the congress, and there was considerable criticism by some of them as to the validity of this point.

Comrade Pierre Frank explained the insertion of "bureaucratic centrism" to characterize the Maoist regime. I won't go into this now.

One of the points to be noted was Livio's impression that much of this discussion was scholastic. He told a story about reading a description in one of Solzhenitsyn's novels of Stalin writing on linguistics; and Solzhenitsyn says at one point, "And at his shoulder stood the angel of scholasticism." Then Livio added, "I thought that angel was in this congress a good deal of the time."

The vote on this resolution was three to one.

I should mention that on both the Latin American resolution and the one on the Cultural Revolution, the International is going to continue the discussion. In many places, the documents had barely arrived on the eve of the congress, and in some places they had not, due to delays in translation and similar difficulties. It was agreed to continue the discussion on the Cultural Revolution immediately after the congress and to reopen discussion on the

Latin American resolution within a reasonable time, six months or so.

We come to the resolution on the youth.¹⁹ We had expected that this would meet with rather general approval at the congress, because it dealt with an explosion on the campuses throughout the world. The role of youth was highlighted at the congress itself by a report from Pakistan, telling what the students had accomplished there. And while we were at the congress a number of items appeared in the papers telling about new student actions.

The report at the congress dealt with these questions: how the revolt of the youth had swept many countries, and how we as Trotskyists had become engaged in this movement in many countries, with special emphasis on what this had led to in France, and what had been accomplished there. From this, we had drawn the conclusion that the main task facing the world Trotskyist movement in the immediate period following the congress was to turn all its resources, insofar as they are available, to our main task, toward becoming preoccupied with this field of work, that is, among the radicalizing youth.

The document itself explained the reasons for this on a world scale, the importance of this politically, and it proposed a series of transitional slogans for work in this field. This is the first time that the Trotskyist movement has proposed a series of transitional slogans for this field.

Somewhat to our surprise, we discovered that there was a good deal of resistance to the document. This was led mostly by the young comrades from France. In their opinion—and this is listed in the order of their differences—first of all, the document was superficial. It didn't fit France. It was not worked out so they could utilize it in France as a guide for their actions. The answer of the comrades favoring the document was that what we were proposing here was a document indicating a line.

Perhaps I should mention that I got the impression that a different concept may be involved as to what should be aimed for in a resolution. Our convention documents are worked out to indicate a line to follow; then we write articles to provide the supporting material and to explain in detail all the developments. If you were to put all this together in a single document, you would have quite a manuscript. But in a resolution we prefer leanness, just the main indications. The comrades in Europe have a tendency to make a huge document, filled with all kinds of explanations, points of fact, quotations, arguments. If someone asks where our movement stands on a particular question, a big

document can be handed to him, and you can say, "Here it is."

This is very useful for a small organization with few members, that does not have its own press, that has only irregular or limited publications. A big document is very handy to have in such circumstances. So when they come to a congress, this is one of the things they expect from it. If they don't get it, they're disappointed and think the document must be superficial or abstract. It doesn't include everything they would like it to include. We noticed at the conference this tendency of comrades from certain countries to ask that specific points be included concerning their country that were of almost a tactical nature. They want such points in so their country is better represented. Then from their standpoint the document is less superficial, more concrete, and of a higher level.

Another argument against the document was that it was noninterventionist, that it was sort of propagandistic and didn't propose direct intervention in struggles, how to intervene precisely. This was raised by some of the French comrades and was really part of their position that the document was not thoroughly enough worked out.

But I also think that their argument that the document wasn't interventionist was probably related to their feeling that the main axis of work in the immediate period should be preparation for guerrilla war and engagement in it where possible.

Then there was some criticism of the slogans. There are two types in the resolution, democratic and transitional. These comrades felt that the democratic slogans have been superseded. Either they belong to a stage long past or they are on too low a level to appeal to the vanguard that we want to reach.

One of our comrades made the observation that they did not seem to have passed the democratic stage in France; otherwise they would not have had the trouble they did in holding their congress. The right to hold a congress freely is a democratic demand. In the last issue of *Intercontinental Press* you can read a report on how some of the people who came to participate in the presidential campaign for Alain Krivine were thrown out of the country by the police.²⁰ This was a violation of democracy. Fighting for democratic rights in France still seems to be very much on the agenda.

On the question of transitional slogans, they raised the point that these really concern the working class, so that in relation to students the only slogan you could raise would be that workers control education. In the case of France, that would mean putting

control of education under the CP. Do you want that?

We could see from this that their concept of a transitional program was different from ours. We conceive of it primarily as a method, an approach, a way to engage in politics; whereas they appear to view it as a completed program, a piece of literature. In any case, it was clear to us that more discussion is required on this particular point, to resolve any differences we may have over the nature of the Transitional Program.

But after all this discussion, with these differences being posed sharply in some instances and argued rather hotly, everybody agreed that the main area of our work in the coming period is the youth. Everybody agreed on this; there was no disagreement on that at all. And a motion was passed that this document should become the basis for a continuing discussion. No vote was taken on this resolution.

On activities. This report dealt mainly with the international campaigns that the Fourth International has been conducting—the big campaign around Hugo Blanco, for example, the big demonstrations around the struggle against the war in Vietnam, and so on. This included such campaigns as the one launched last year to help the French comrades during the May-June events. One of the encouraging figures, showing the growth of the Trotskyist movement, was the weekly circulation of the Trotskyist press on a world scale—about 100,000 copies. On recruiting, the success of the French comrades in this field was reported as a star example. From a very small grouping, they expanded to a rather sizable formation. Now with the election campaign they have just been engaging in, they will probably be able to double the forces they had previously.

On the negative side, the reporter dealt with the perennial weakness of the center and the necessity of strengthening the center. This, of course, had a familiar ring to our ears, since we have had a similar problem over the years. More personnel, more finances, better conditions of work—these, it was hoped, would solve the problem. They do have very difficult conditions considering the legal status of the Fourth International in most countries—it's not easy to remedy the situation.

Now let me summarize where we stand. On the nature of the differences and what may happen: I think we will have to see how the discussion will develop before drawing any conclusions about this. The differences over orientation on guerrilla warfare should very shortly be put to the practical test, and I think it

won't be too long before we'll be able to have better evidence on the particular question, one way or the other. We will see to what degree the coming social explosions involve the urban masses. Maybe the comrades who put great store in the strategy of guerrilla war will be able to gain a breakthrough, putting a Trotskyist government in power in some country in the immediate future. I am afraid that the odds are against this. The experience up to now has not proved promising, including the experience of Che Guevara's attempt. But it remains to be seen. And maybe some of the comrades have learned much more than we would give them credit for.

On the question of China: this discussion should, I think, prove quite interesting. It may involve basic concepts and our basic analysis of the Chinese revolution; but it remains to be seen how deep the differences are and how firmly different comrades will stand on their positions as the discussion develops and arguments are advanced.

We should add that there's another area in which differences may come up—the estimate of 1953. One of the points that was left off the agenda was a resolution on the question of entryism as it was practiced in Europe. The resolution ends the application of entryism but also includes a historic estimate of it, so if you vote for the resolution you not only have to vote for the change in tactics, but also for the historic estimate included in the package. And this rather compels those who disagreed with this tactic or considered it a dangerous one that may have at times cost more than it was worth—it requires them to say something about the historic estimate in the resolution. As to what that will lead to, it's hard to say; I don't imagine the differences being of such grave nature as to lead to any hot discussion.

But it could turn out that the discussion on China and on the question of guerrilla warfare as it develops, the question of party building as it is associated with the problem of entryism, that all of this could turn out to be one of the richest and most educational discussions that the Fourth International and the world Trotskyist movement has had up to this point. That remains to be seen. My feeling is rather optimistic.

I should state that, in my opinion, the discussion on these points is not at all doctrinaire; it's not a question of hairsplitting, dogma, or anything like that. In each of these instances, we're dealing with very real problems in which Trotskyists are deeply involved in their countries, problems which they meet every day

and try to handle for good or for bad. In the case of guerrilla warfare, there's not a country in Latin America where this is not advocated by key sectors of the vanguard.

The question of the Cultural Revolution is of top concern because of the Maoist groupings. Relations with them vary from country to country or grouping to grouping. In some cases Maoists are involved in common actions with our comrades and this necessitates a certain tone in talking with them. In other places relations with the Maoists are quite different.

Our way of solving differences of this kind in the movement is through free and democratic discussion. That's the tradition in the Trotskyist movement. I think that in the coming period we'll demonstrate once again the contrast between the monolithism of bureaucratic parties, like the CP and the Social Democracy, and a living movement like ours, that recruits and assimilates through discussion and debate related to actions in which we are engaged.

A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America

Events of sufficient importance have occurred since the last world congress of the Fourth International to provide some significant tests of the position on Latin America adopted by the majority of the delegates at that gathering.

On the conclusions concerning the bleak perspective facing capitalism in Latin America and the general economic, social, and political instability of the continent, conclusions upon which all the delegates were in agreement, the resolution has stood up well. Little needs to be added to what was said in April 1969.

On the central axis of work for the subsequent period, over which a division of opinion occurred, with a substantial minority opposed to adopting a strategic orientation of preparing for and engaging in rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period, things stand differently.

It is worth recalling the enthusiasm of some of the delegates at the congress over this orientation.

"Best Chance of a Breakthrough"

In a contribution to the pregress discussion, "An Insufficient Document," Comrade Livio Maitan declared:

What is expected from us from now on is that we demonstrate in practice the historical value of our movement and we will be judged essentially on this basis. This can appear, at bottom, to be an elementary

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truth, but it is a question of inspiring our whole activity with this recognition. It is a question more precisely of determining in what countries we have the best chance of a breakthrough and subordinating everything to the elementary necessity for a success in these countries, and even, if necessary, in a single country. The rest will come later.¹

Comrade Maitan listed several possibilities—"youth movement in France, antiwar movement and youth movement in the United States, South Africa with a certain time) and we must unquestionably make an effort in the direction of India. . . ."²

But of the prospective areas, Comrade Maitan was of the opinion that

we must place everything above all on a sector of Latin America and you know very well which one. We must exploit the preparatory period of the congress to convince the entire movement to operate in practice, every day, with this perspective. Permit me to express myself a little paradoxically: it is necessary to understand and to explain that at the present stage the International will be built around Bolivia.³

Comrade Maitan did such a thorough job of convincing the majority of the delegates that the state of mind of some of them verged on euphoria. Thus one delegate was of the opinion that the immediate perspectives were so brilliant that for the first time a congress of the Fourth International was actually discussing the possibility of taking power somewhere in the world!

The Defeat in Bolivia

On July 14, 1969, only a few months after the world congress, a turncoat who had betrayed Che Guevara's guerrilla front in Bolivia was shot in his home in Santa Cruz. The Ejército de Liberación Nacional, headed by "Inti" Peredo, issued a statement that he had been executed as "an act of justice." The government struck back with extreme ferocity, staging a nationwide witch-hunt in which some were killed, many tortured, and hundreds imprisoned. On September 9 "Inti" Peredo was killed. The guerrillas had suffered a crushing defeat. *Intercontinental Press* carried extensive accounts, including reports on the involvement of our comrades and their victimization. It is not necessary to repeat in this article what was published in *Intercontinental Press*.⁴

At the next congress, the Bolivian comrades will no doubt tell

the full story of what happened and draw whatever lessons they think ought to be drawn. It is to be hoped that they will be able to clear up several obscure points, particularly the policies followed by "Inti" Peredo.

For instance, in an interview published in *Punto Final* in June 1969 just before the guerrilla front went into action, "Inti" Peredo made the following declaration: "The ELN maintains the principles established by Che. We hold valid the thesis of the need for a guerrilla *foco* in the current situation in Latin America. Because of this we announced that we would return to the mountains. We will build an armed force. We are not trying to form a political party."⁵

Peredo was thus on public record as opposing party building and favoring *foquismo*. Were Peredo's views known to the Bolivian comrades when they participated in the front which he led? Even for those who believe in the strategy of guerrilla war, as opposed to the strategy of building a Leninist combat party, it should have been obvious that the *foquista* concepts held by the head of the Bolivian guerrilla front doomed the possibilities of success.

But Peredo, it must be believed, was operating according to *foquista* concepts at the time of the world congress of the Fourth International, although it was not reported there. In retrospect we can see still more clearly what illusions some of the delegates were laboring under in believing that by throwing the Trotskyist movement behind Peredo's guerrilla front in Bolivia, the Fourth International could make a historic breakthrough within months, after which the rest would follow.

Minority Favored Guerrilla Warfare as a Tactic

To prevent being misunderstood, let me recall the position taken by the minority at the world congress. The minority did not reject guerrilla warfare *per se*. On the contrary, it recognized that under certain circumstances engagement in guerrilla warfare can prove advantageous. In my article "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America," I stated:

A section of the Fourth International may find that at a certain stage of the revolutionary process in its country, it is necessary and productive to engage in guerrilla war, as a specific form of armed struggle. The proviso is that it be conceived as a tactic entailed by political considerations, not a new-found formula guaranteeing quick or certain success, and that it be

within the means available to the section. This holds, it should be added, not only for Latin America but for similar areas elsewhere.⁶

This was rejected by the majority, and with particular insistence by Comrade Maitan. I will consider the possible reasons further on. I wish to stress here only that the minority at the world congress favored guerrilla warfare as a tactic which sections of the Fourth International might find useful at the right time and right place in furtherance of political aims related to revolutionary strategy as a whole.

A necessary condition is the development of leaderships in the sections of high enough level and sufficient experience to be able to make correct political judgments on guerrilla war as on other important tactical questions. Whether such leaderships actually exist can only be determined, of course, by how they conduct themselves, including how they assess their victories and defeats.

Besides the defeat suffered by our movement in Bolivia, another serious defeat was suffered in Argentina, where the official section (*El Combatiente*) was hard hit in Rosario. Two accounts of this have been published in *Intercontinental Press*, but little can be said about the lessons to be drawn in the absence of an official report from the leadership of the section.⁷ It is to be hoped that an objective assessment can be made available as part of the internal discussion on Latin America.

“Absolutely Clear” in Peru and Bolivia

The majority resolution on Latin America failed to stand up well in another area. To justify converting rural guerrilla war into a strategy, it was argued that the Latin American ruling class, operating hand in glove with U.S. imperialism, left no other alternative open. Against the ferocious violence of the ruling class, nothing could be done except to turn to guerrilla struggle.

As the resolution put it, after acknowledging the mass mobilizations that occurred in 1968:

Nonetheless, revolutionary Marxists cannot conclude from this that the “classical” variant calling for a progressive rise and broadening of the mass movement and its structuring and reenforcement through traditional organizational forms before it reaches the armed struggle has been revalidated. In the international context, after all the experiences of the last decade and in face of an increasingly brutal repression by the native ruling classes and imperialism, such a variant is not the most probable.

In reality, the adversary is in no wise ready to allow a mass revolutionary movement to organize more or less legally or normally, not only because in the given economic and social conditions a general mobilization even for economic goals would threaten disastrous consequences for the system, but also and above all because the men in power no longer underestimate the dynamics of mass movements, even when they start off with limited objectives. The experience of Bolivia, where all forms of normal organizational activity are continually stamped out, as well as the experience of Peru, where the repression has not let up since 1962, especially in the countryside, are absolutely clear.⁸

The main spokesman for the majority, Comrade Maitan, has been compelled in the light of subsequent events to make a considerable shift. In his article "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America," which appeared in the April 20, 1970, issue of *Intercontinental Press*, Comrade Maitan had no choice but to admit the appearance of reformist regimes in Latin America.

Moreover, not as a freakish, isolated occurrence:

The Peruvian and Bolivian events and the orientation adopted by Velasco Alvarado and Ovando Candia—who are trying to give the impression that they are the initiators of a revolutionary-democratic renewal and a struggle against the imperialist grip on their countries—deserve attention not only for their intrinsic importance but also because they express a tendency which might materialize in other countries as well. In fact "Peruvian" currents are taking form increasingly in other places and it is symptomatic that in the ranks of the revolutionary movement itself some are predicting and even hoping that these currents will come to power.⁹

Still more: "To complete the picture, American imperialism . . . adopted a cautious wait-and-see attitude toward the Peruvian regime and, in spite of everything, toward Ovando as well. The outline of a more flexible line for Latin America was, moreover, presented in the Rockefeller report."¹⁰

Comrade Maitan draws an absolutely clear conclusion from the current developments, although it is the opposite of the equally absolutely clear conclusion in the antecedent majority resolution: "All of this confirms the fact that there are important forces, and forces of a different nature, which have a stake in a positive development of the experiments in progress in Peru and in Bolivia. This implies also that in certain conditions similar experiments might be undertaken in other countries."¹¹

In short, a big change may be in the making. Who knows? "I am considering potential tendencies which may or may not crystallize. However, the important thing is that these tendencies exist, are operating, and already constitute one of the elements in the political interaction in Latin America."¹²

Did these potential tendencies exist at the time of the world congress? A delegate who ventured to express the thought that such a variant was conceivable, in some areas at least, met with stern reproof. But events compelled Comrade Maitan to shift his view. *Ironically the events occurred in the very countries cited in the majority resolution as definitive proof that all variants other than "increasingly brutal repression" had been excluded.*

The lesson to be drawn from this is the danger of thinking in absolutes, especially where tactics are involved. It was "absolutely" excluded that U.S. imperialism could adopt flexible tactics. It was "absolutely" excluded that the indigenous bourgeoisie had any alternative tactics they could resort to but the most brutal repression. Therefore the revolutionists had "absolutely" no choice but to elevate guerrilla warfare into the main axis of their work and engage in it no matter what the thinking of the masses or the state of the mass movement might be.

A Tactical Question After All

In conjunction with this, another welcome turn is to be noted in Comrade Maitan's article. He now places more stress on "the need for preliminary political and organizational work" before engaging in armed struggle.

"And without such preparation," he states, "any attempt at armed struggle will be condemned to isolation and failure. There would also be the danger of forgetting that there are periods when an effort to develop mass work and to create the instruments for this must have absolute priority."¹³

He even makes a notable concession to the view that engagement in guerrilla war is a tactical question:

For example, it would be absurd in Peru today to rely primarily on preparing a new wave of guerrilla warfare, failing to understand the need for deepgoing activity of political clarification and to exploit all the possibilities which, despite everything, the new situation offers for stimulating mass movements and establishing links with them. This is also true on a different scale and probably for a markedly shorter period for Bolivia.¹⁴

Perhaps the biggest shift since the world congress has taken place in the position of the Bolivian comrades. In a unanimous resolution passed in November 1969, the Bolivian comrades adjusted their position as follows:

The military's operation to rescue the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state has forced it to relax the repression of the unions. Having failed in its attempt to destroy the unions, the government is now moving to animate the unions with the aim of hitching them to its cart. This makes possible a certain democratic leeway which must be utilized to the maximum. We must provide the driving force for a reorganization of the entire workers movement from the individual unions on up to the COB, based on an independent class line. But trade-union reorganization must be combined with a struggle for a program of economic, social, and political demands. We must resume the struggle from the level it had reached when the repression came.¹⁵

In resuming the struggle in the indicated way, the Bolivian comrades outlined in their resolution the main points of "a transitional program providing impetus to a mass mobilization." They spelled this out in specific detail in the statement they issued to the mine workers' congress held at the Siglo Veinte mine the second week of April.¹⁶

Our Bolivian comrades made a correct turn in resuming activities in accordance with the method indicated in the 1938 Transitional Program. Trotskyists throughout the world will feel gratified that the Bolivian section was able to make this readjustment.

In *practice* our Bolivian comrades *in this instance* handled involvement in "rural guerrilla warfare" as a tactical question, to be judged in the light of the ups and downs of their national situation and in relation to their own needs and opportunities. But this was one of the key points the minority sought to establish at the world congress as a general concept of our movement.

What is primary in revolutionary strategy, the minority maintained, is building a combat party; resorting to guerrilla warfare should be regarded as a secondary, tactical question. That the Bolivian comrades found themselves compelled to act as they did, departing from the majority line which they had wholeheartedly subscribed to and sought to carry out, offers a certain lesson.

Still, It's More Than a Tactic

It is strange in the light of this experience that both Comrade Maitan and the Bolivian comrades should still insist on the correctness of the majority position.

In their November 1969 resolution mentioned above, the Bolivian comrades assert: "Guerrilla warfare is still a valid method. The blows suffered and the losses of men and equipment are not important. However painful, all these losses can be repaired. The important thing is to be clear on the fact that there is no other path for real revolutionists."¹⁷ Again:

Despite the defeats suffered, we reaffirm the validity of guerrilla warfare. Therefore, the duty of every Marxist-Leninist revolutionary is to join in this conception. Giving life to the guerrilla movement and the revolutionary army is intimately bound up with revolutionary mobilization of the masses; this will be the culture medium of the guerrillas, as Che said. Guerrilla warfare is the continuation by other means of the class struggle; it is the culmination of the mass movement.¹⁸

Comrade Maitan speaks even more clearly in his article "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America." Having just agreed that "it would be absurd in Peru today to rely primarily on preparing a new wave of guerrilla warfare," and having just conceded that this also holds true for Bolivia—the two countries that served as prime exhibits for an opposite view at the world congress—Comrade Maitan reaffirms the majority position. He restates the thesis that constituted the heart of the majority position at the world congress:

The fundamental perspective, the only realistic perspective for Latin America is that of an armed struggle which may last for long years. . . . Even in the case of countries where large mobilizations and class conflicts in the cities may occur first, civil war will take manifold forms of armed struggle, in which the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare, the term having primarily a geographical-military meaning and not necessarily implying an exclusively peasant composition of the fighting detachments (or even necessarily preponderantly peasant composition). In this sense, armed struggle in Latin America means fundamentally guerrilla warfare.¹⁹

In the balance of his polemic, Comrade Maitan seeks to put his unnamed opponents in the position of either being against armed struggle in principle, or of making a false dichotomy between mobilization of the masses and engagement in armed struggle, or

of raising false problems such as the interrelationship of tactics and strategy. Above all, he insists that the key question facing the revolutionary movement in Latin America is to work out in advance the concrete forms which the armed struggle in the coming years is likely to take.

On this he appears to feel that he, along with the "great majority of Latin-American revolutionists," has already come up with the correct answer. In a single sentence Comrade Maitan states the gist: "If you take account of the geographical facts, the demographical structures of the majority of the population, and the technical and military considerations stressed by Che himself, it follows that the variant of rural guerrilla warfare on a continentwide scale will be the most probable one."²⁰

That's an accurate statement of the majority position, including the intimation that its original inspiration is to be found in the tactical prescriptions which the Cubans sought to substitute for the strategy of building combat parties in Latin America.

The Discussion Among the Guerrilla Fighters

Other changes have occurred in the situations facing our movement in Latin America besides the ones in Peru and Bolivia. Since the last world congress, the configuration of the revolutionary vanguard has undergone significant alteration.

The most important development is undoubtedly the discussion opened by such figures as Héctor Béjar on the lessons to be drawn from the guerrilla experience.²¹ As thinking revolutionists, they cannot help but wonder what has gone wrong. Why is it that more than ten years after the Cuban revolution not another success has been registered in the entire continent? It is surely not due to lack of courage or audacity, to lack of commitment to armed struggle, to failure to regard the Cuban revolution as the great model to be emulated.

As a first approximation in making an analysis, some of the revolutionists have sought to locate technical, or perhaps political, errors. Not a few, as was to be expected, have been found. But then the Cubans made not a few technical and even political errors, yet succeeded. The Cuban experience demonstrated that it is possible to commit considerable errors without ending in disaster. Nevertheless throughout Latin America, attempt after attempt in countries of the most varied kind and with leaders of the most varied temperaments and skills have ended in defeat.

One of the reasons adduced is the more intensive repression

exercised by U.S. imperialism. But if this were *the* reason, then it is clear that a more effective and powerful strategy than the one used by the Cubans is required.

Inevitably the most conscious revolutionists are haunted by the feeling that something is eluding them in their efforts to discover what has been going wrong.

It is very instructive to see how in their efforts they continually touch on questions directly connected with the problem of building a combat party. This stands out with the utmost clarity in Héctor Béjar's analysis, although he continually turns away from that road. Moreover, in their efforts they are drawn, despite themselves, toward reading Trotsky.

This search for the correct reasons for the defeats suffered by the Latin American revolution since the Cuban victory is a very positive development. It shows that some important sectors of the vanguard, or at least some important cadres, have come to realize that action alone is not sufficient. Correct concepts—a correct theory—are also required. This is in marked difference from the Cuban revolutionists, who got along without much theory and who even decried theory.

The Trotskyist movement has every reason to foster this discussion and to offer answers of its own. Unfortunately the majority line is not conducive to this. History has settled the question, if we are to believe Comrade Maitan. Che was right. Guerrilla warfare is the solution, and an alternative strategy, reducing guerrilla warfare to a tactical problem, is a priori virtually excluded, including the Russian strategy in 1917, of which Trotsky, following Lenin, was the greatest practitioner and exponent.

The Cubans Pause for Reflection

Another very important change in the Latin American situation is the current reluctance of the Cuban leaders to become involved in "rural guerrilla warfare."

At the world congress, the majority counted on the Cubans continuing to do what they had done in the case of the guerrilla front opened by Che Guevara in Bolivia. This was a hazardous calculation, the minority maintained, because the full consequences of the defeat of Che had yet to be measured. In particular the Cubans might be in the process of reassessing their line in Latin America in view of the repeated setbacks that had been experienced. If the Cubans were to undertake a reorientation, the

minority pointed out, then the resources available to the small groups still committed to carrying out the old line would become even more limited. To plunge ahead despite this change in the situation could prove to be exceedingly ill-advised.

It is now fairly clear that what the minority called attention to at the world congress (and much before that in the leadership of the world Trotskyist movement) turned out to be an accurate political assessment. The changed attitude of the Cubans has now become one of the key questions in the discussion going on in the vanguard over revolutionary strategy in Latin America and what course to take. This has had its repercussions inside the Fourth International.

In the resolution passed at the world congress, the first task assigned to the revolutionary Marxists in Latin America was: "Integration into the historic revolutionary current represented by the Cuban revolution and the OLAS, which involves, regardless of the forms, integration into the continental revolutionary front which the OLAS constitutes."²²

The majority has now been compelled to modify this. In his article "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America," Comrade Maitan writes:

First of all, it must be noted that not only has the OLAS, as an organization, failed lamentably but also that the role of the Cuban leadership in the Latin-American revolution is being increasingly disputed. I already mentioned the public attack on the Cuban leadership by Douglas Bravo's movement.²³ But others are also expressing criticisms that follow more or less the same lines. In fact, most of the groups linked to Castroism are increasingly taking their distance from Havana, accentuating their independence. They now have a tendency to consider the relations they establish among themselves more important than their relations with the Cubans and what remains of OLAS—more properly speaking, of the preliminary moves to establish this organization.²⁴

In order to maintain a correct attitude toward the Cuban revolution, it is of crucial importance to understand the pressures it faces and the courses open to the Cuban leadership. Some comrades in the Fourth International appear to be leaning to the opinion that a qualitative change has occurred and that Cuba ought now to be designated as a degenerated workers' state. Against this view, Comrade Maitan argues—correctly so, in my opinion—that while various things are disturbing, particularly the political influence of the Kremlin, the adverse developments have not reached the point of qualitative change.

It must be said, however, that Comrade Maitan's attempt to rebut the charge that Fidel Castro has given up internationalism is exceptionally weak:

Revolution in Latin America is still considered a necessary condition for the survival and development of the Cuban state itself. There is indisputably a turning inward on domestic problems and a pause for reflection. It is also probable that no initiative similar to Che's Bolivian campaign nor even like those previously in Venezuela will be attempted in the present stage. But there is nothing to support the assumption that in the event of the outbreak of a new wave of revolutionary struggle and armed struggle in a Latin-American country the Cuban leadership would adopt a reserved attitude or try to cool things down. Once again its active solidarity would be assured.²⁵

The guerrilla groups that charge the Cubans with having given up internationalism point precisely to the lack of "active solidarity" in operations designed to further the strategy of "rural guerrilla warfare." Their point is well taken if you agree with them that "the only realistic perspective for Latin America is that of an armed struggle" and that "armed struggle in Latin America means fundamentally guerrilla warfare." However, that is precisely the viewpoint of the majority. Comrade Maitan reasserts it in the most emphatic way in his article.

Were he to participate actively in the discussion now being carried on between the Cubans and their critics on this point, he would in all consistency have to agree with those who are "taking their distance from Havana." For what is their basic point? It is simply that they are attempting to continue in accordance with the line previously followed by the Cubans. It is the Cubans who have changed, not they.

Shouldn't Comrade Maitan come to their aid by at least polemicizing with the Cubans, marshaling arguments to convince them to stop drifting in such a crucial matter as "rural guerrilla warfare" and to resume their old line?

We, Too, Should Pause to Reflect

It would be wiser for our movement, of course, to emulate the Cubans in their "pause for reflection," even if our conclusions are not the same as theirs.

Since the defeat of Che Guevara in Bolivia, the Cubans have faced a crisis in their international revolutionary orientation. The

basis of the crisis is the failure of "rural guerrilla warfare" to win any successes. It has met with defeat after defeat.

In addition, despite all the prestige of the Cuban revolution and the immense advantage of holding state power, the Cubans even appear to have come out second in their factional struggle with the Stalinists on the continent.

Precisely because of their success in Cuba, it was difficult for the Cubans to see the negative consequences of their orientation placing guerrilla warfare above party building. How could it be that what had proved successful in one instance should prove disastrous in a series of other instances? The outcome of Che's venture proved conclusively that it was not a question of experience or know-how. What, then, is the correct solution to the crisis?

It would be a big mistake for our movement to exclude the possibility of the Cuban leaders, or at least some of them, eventually arriving at a correct solution. It is true that the outcome is not guaranteed; the comrades who are ready today to write off the Cubans may have the satisfaction finally of being able to say that they were right. But one of the determinants in the outcome may well prove to be our own attitude toward the Cubans, particularly our explanations and the course we propose.

Thus both for the fate of the Latin American revolution and for the immediate future of the Trotskyist movement it is of the utmost importance to fight for a positive outcome to the dilemma facing the Cubans in their international revolutionary orientation.

From this standpoint, Comrade Maitan's insistence on the sovereign virtues of "rural guerrilla warfare" is disorienting. In his article "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America," he reduces the key problem of the Latin American revolution to that of sketching "the concrete forms armed struggle will take." As a contribution, he sketches various forms, trying to put them into a kind of logical order and to assess the chances of their being seen in Latin America in the future. This is a barren exercise in the absence of the political context, particularly the party-building context, of the forms. Above all, he is attracted to guerrilla warfare. "Guerrilla warfare," he says, "has proved at the same time necessary and effective in all kinds of experiences over the past fifty years in Asia and Africa, as well as in Europe itself during the Nazi occupation (above all in Yugoslavia, in Italy, and in France)."²⁶

The only conclusion the Cubans could come to on reading that,

if they are utilizing their pause for reflection to really think things through, is that the Trotskyists have become more "Cuban" than the Cubans and that they are advancing arguments that hardly point forward.

The Basic Problem Is Political, Not Technical

What the Fourth International should do by every conceivable means is insist on the primary task *at the present stage*. This is to begin at the beginning—to assemble sufficient cadres to start serious construction of Leninist combat parties.

This requires a sustained polemic against all the tendencies that stand in the road or that threaten to divert the work. The main one, of course, still remains Stalinism, which has gained a reprieve in Latin America because of the persistence of the Cubans and others in seeking to lift rural guerrilla warfare into a strategy in opposition to the strategy of party building.

It also requires some concrete examples of what we mean when we talk about engaging in revolutionary politics. And some concrete examples, anywhere in the world, of what we mean when we talk about building a Leninist party.

This is so elementary that one feels embarrassed to have to insist on it more than three decades after the founding of the Fourth International. Yet this is the real situation, and there is no point in blinking at it. A few further words should be said about this in the interests of rearming our movement.

Once Again, the Meaning of Cuba

The most decisive turning point in the long ideological struggle against the pernicious influence of Stalinism was the Cuban revolution. Viewed in historic perspective, the leaders of this revolution represented the first contingent of a new generation that was able to appreciate the positive meaning of the Russian revolution and the existence of the Soviet Union, yet was repelled by Stalinism.

This contingent came to power in Cuba through means that had long ago been superseded in the arsenal of revolutionary Marxism. That this could actually occur was solely owing to the default of Stalinism in combination with objective conditions for revolution that were exceptionally favorable.

Our movement hailed this development, defended it with all our energy, and sought to further and to extend the Cuban revolution.

The absence of a revolutionary Marxist party in Cuba did not disconcert us because we understood the uniqueness of the combination of circumstances that had made the success possible. We considered that the logic of the revolution, if it were not to fall back, would impel the development of such a party in Cuba in the long run and that the same would hold true in Latin America as a whole. Our basic line therefore remained promulgation of the theory and practice of building revolutionary Marxist parties as the correct revolutionary strategy.

We faced some difficult tactical problems. While the Cuban revolutionists had succeeded in bypassing the Cuban Communist Party, they were forced into reliance on the Soviet Union for material aid because of the efforts of U.S. imperialism to crush the revolution. Without that aid the Cuban revolution, as a matter of simple fact, could not have survived. Nevertheless an overhead political cost was involved. The Cubans were undoubtedly made aware, if they did not sense it themselves, that one of the conditions for receiving material aid was to keep "Trotskyism" at a distance. Stalinism was thus able to play a certain role in Cuban affairs. The resulting unhealthy state of affairs reached its height under Aníbal Escalante.²⁷

A further complication was that the cause of the Cuban revolution was taken up with the greatest enthusiasm by the youth everywhere. This was an extraordinarily heartening development with its clear portent for the future. However, these revolutionary-minded youth did not understand the basic political reasons for the Cuban success; they sought the explanation on the side of skillful technique in the use of arms.

The Cubans fostered this lack of understanding, wittingly or not, since they never assessed their own revolution in the light of the default of Stalinism. To have done so, they would have had to settle accounts with Stalinism—to which the Kremlin would have responded by cutting off material aid.

Moreover, the Cubans in their own international revolutionary orientation insisted on the priority of skill in the technique of armed struggle. Their contempt for theory and hostility to party building were additional negative elements.

All of this fostered ultraleftism and even an antipolitical attitude among the youth drawn into the orbit of the Cuban revolution, particularly in Latin America. It should be added that, like many youth on first coming to revolutionary views, they were inclined toward ultraleftism to begin with. They thus evinced a strong predilection for sheer action, violent action, even

by small, isolated contingents, without consideration for the political necessity to calculate everything they did and said in relation to the problem of reaching the masses and organizing and mobilizing them on the necessary scale.

This was where the revolutionary-minded youth were to be found, this was what they were like, and the Trotskyists, if they were not to lose contact with the new generation of revolutionists, beginning with the Cubans, had to go through the experience with them.

The Extraordinary Value of Hugo Blanco's Work

In taking this course, we made no concessions in principle. In the imperialist centers we stood on our own Trotskyist program in the first line of defense of the Cuban revolution. It is enough to recall what the Trotskyists in the United States and Canada did in helping to organize and advance the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.²⁸ Our comrades in Europe and India and many countries in Latin America were similarly active.

Our first big advance came in Peru through the work of Hugo Blanco, carried out with the active participation of Argentine comrades like Daniel Pereyra and Eduardo Creus under the leadership of Comrade Nahuel Moreno.²⁹

Regarding engagement in guerrilla warfare as a tactical question, these comrades at first made an effort along the lines of the Cuban model. Through hard practical experience they soon learned that it had disadvantages. Working directly with his own people, whose Quechua language he spoke, Hugo Blanco discovered more effective means of mobilizing them on a broad scale. Around the slogan "Land or Death!" Hugo Blanco established a nucleus of cadres who succeeded in building a peasant movement that shook Peru. Some who were outside this work have charged that Hugo Blanco was inspired by "syndicalist" notions. Others said later that he overlooked the necessity for "armed struggle." Neither allegation is true. Hugo Blanco was inspired by Trotskyist concepts and he did not hide them.

The movement was defeated, owing to two reasons. The first was that it was left in the lurch by the leftist organizations in the cities, which were dominated primarily by the Stalinists or had other reasons for antipathy to Hugo Blanco's political approach. The second reason for the defeat was the absence of a Leninist combat party on a national scale.

Héctor Béjar has bitterly criticized the Stalinists and those

influenced by them for the historic opportunity they let slip by denying aid to Hugo Blanco's movement. On the question of the absence of a combat party, Héctor Béjar holds a position heavily influenced by the antipolitical conceptions of the radical Latin American youth who came most directly under the sway of the Cuban ideology. In his opinion, "premature" organization of a political party can doom a revolutionary cause.

Hugo Blanco has criticized himself for not devoting more attention to the problem of party building on a national scale. He is correct in seeing the negative results of not having on hand an already constructed party; but how much more he could have done along these lines personally under the circumstances is not easy to determine by anyone not intimately involved in the events. In any case, it hardly behooves those on the outside to lay too much stress on how Hugo Blanco might better have directed his activities. He was very young, he was gaining invaluable experience in mass work, he was learning by leaps and bounds, he was making a historic contribution. Above all, he was not opposed to party building. He was in fact imbued with a clear theoretical concept of its necessity.

The outcome of this experience was that Hugo Blanco emerged as Peru's most outstanding revolutionary figure. The Fourth International is not exaggerating when it stresses this. It is acknowledged without debate by the most varied sources, including those in the enemy camp.

In presenting Trotskyism to the radicalizing youth of Latin America from 1962 on—that is, the youth in those countries who were especially caught up with the concept that guerrilla warfare and only guerrilla warfare offered any hope for success in carrying out the socialist revolution—the world Trotskyist movement was in a position to point to the work of Hugo Blanco.

The meaning of Hugo Blanco's course lay not solely in his personal example and his valor. Others have been similarly valorous and similarly dedicated. For the world Trotskyist movement, for the Fourth International, the value of what Hugo Blanco did lay in his *political* line as developed in the living struggle in Peru.

Through the example of his work, Hugo Blanco gave incomparable assistance to the Fourth International in those years when young revolutionists, inclined under the influence of the Cubans to make a principle of guerrilla action, demanded that we show them something in practice matching what we had laid out on the level of theory and program.

The value of this example has not lessened with time. Just the contrary. Hugo Blanco's reputation is looming ever larger, as is shown by the estimate made of his work by Héctor Béjar in his essay which won the *Casa de las Américas* prize for 1969. If we are to engage in self-criticism, it ought to be for not doing more in publicizing Hugo Blanco's work in recent years and in seeking better to emulate it.

The Danger of Adaptation

In deliberately turning in the direction of the youth aroused by the Cuban revolution and becoming involved with them, our movement faced the danger of adapting to their primitive political level. That danger had to be accepted, the alternative being a sectarian withdrawal from the scene of struggle in the manner of the Healyites, who simply walked away from Latin America and defense of the Cuban revolution.³⁰ It appeared, however, that the majority of cadres in the world Trotskyist movement were of sufficiently high political level to reduce the danger to a minimum.

The greatest pressure toward adaptation came in the beginning, and we saw some instances in the immediate aftermath of the Cuban victory that were quite painful. This was the case, for instance, with Comrade Bengochea and his group, who split from the Trotskyist movement to set up a guerrilla front in Argentina in isolation from the masses and as an alternative to party building.³¹

Strangely enough at first sight, it was only when the Cubans themselves initiated their "pause for reflection" that a majority in the top leadership of the Fourth International fell victim to the disease and elevated "rural guerrilla warfare" into a main strategy in Latin America, passing a resolution to that effect at the last world congress.

We are faced, inevitably, with the question, "How could this happen?"

A possible subjective explanation is that the central leadership feels that our movement faces unparalleled opportunities and that we must not "miss the boat." As Comrade Maitan phrased it in his contribution, "An Insufficient Document":

Our capacity for political analysis and overall theoretical generalization . . . will be a major trump card in the future, too. . . . More particularly, our role will be appreciated at its true value by the new

movements if we are in position to express in time and better than any other current their real needs and to outline solutions to the problems which they raise.³²

As an abstract statement, this is unassailable. Concretely, however, we have seen what Comrade Maitan meant: It is to express in time and better than any other current the best technique for conducting "rural guerrilla warfare."

Again, in the same document, Comrade Maitan specifies: "But it is only by successes or revolutionary struggles at the head of a mass movement in one or several countries that we will be able to surmount our difficulties and present contradictions. What is expected from us from now on is that we demonstrate in practice the historical value of our movement and we will be judged essentially on this basis."³³

Concretely we can now see better what he meant. The Fourth International, in Comrade Maitan's opinion, can overcome its present difficulties only by engaging in "rural guerrilla warfare" better than anyone else, and "we will be judged essentially on this basis."

"Rural guerrilla warfare," Comrade Maitan seems to feel, offers a surefire means by which the Fourth International can win an early breakthrough in Latin America and, no doubt, elsewhere. If others have failed to derive the full benefits of "rural guerrilla warfare," it is because they were not as good technicians as the Trotskyists can prove to be under the guidance of the majority.

In other words, reacting to the demand that the Fourth International produce a major organizational success in the immediate future, the majority leaders have looked for shortcuts and have found one—they believe—in "rural guerrilla warfare."

They appear to view the formula as widely applicable. This is perhaps the reason they refused at the world congress to accept the evaluation of guerrilla warfare as a tactical matter. The majority, of course, acted consistently in refusing to concede on this even if it meant creating a rather sharp division among the delegates. If "rural guerrilla warfare" is elevated into a main strategy, it ought to be viewed as a matter of principle, precisely as the minority views the priority of party building as a principle.

Thus two concepts concerning the main road of the revolution were adumbrated at the congress.

The source of the pressure for elevating "rural guerrilla warfare" into a principle is clear. It is the guerrilla fighters, particularly in Latin America (with the Cubans currently counted out as

they pause for reflection), and significant sections of the radicalizing youth, that is, those who have not yet gained political experience and who have made a mystique out of the fate of Che Guevara and who don't know about Hugo Blanco's example.

The course prescribed by Comrade Maitan and made official in the Latin American resolution represents a concession to ultraleftism. This is how it must be characterized objectively.

If we consider this happening in the context of the development of the Fourth International in recent years, we can better see why it occurred when it did. Our patience with the ultraleftist mood among sections of the radicalizing youth, our understanding of the origin of this mood, and our tactical flexibility in dealing with it enabled us to recruit sufficient cadres so that when the radicalization of the youth began on a mass scale internationally, we soon began recruiting by the hundreds wherever we had well-established parties or groups. In France, for instance, our movement experienced dramatic growth in the May-June 1968 period. It was precisely following this exhilarating expansion of forces that some of the leaders of the Fourth International, above all Comrade Maitan, began adapting to ultraleftism.

In Latin America at the same time, successive defeats of the guerrilla fronts and the shrinking of the forces available to the various guerrilla movements appeared to offer exceptional opportunities to Trotskyists and others willing to make an immediate major commitment to guerrilla action. Some of the comrades who were convinced of the extraordinary gains to be made on the quick wanted more than a tactical view of engaging in guerrilla warfare. They wanted total commitment of the movement as a whole, the elevation of engagement on the guerrilla road into a principle.

It was this combination that provided Comrade Maitan with his majority at the world congress.

Consistent application of the course charted by Comrade Maitan would prove disastrous for the Fourth International. The line could hardly be confined to Latin America or even the colonial world generally, for the same ultraleft tendencies to which the adaptation has been made are operative in the imperialist centers. Fostering an ultraleft course in Latin America would surely be paralleled by permissiveness toward ultraleftism, if not worse, in the imperialist centers. In fact, there is evidence that this has already been occurring in the quite different context of conditions in Britain.

The adoption of a resolution by a world congress elevating

“rural guerrilla war” into a main strategy should therefore be regarded as a grave development. After full discussion on the issues in all the sections of the Fourth International, every effort should be made at the next world congress to rectify this error.

already read

In Defense of the Leninist Strategy of Party Building

The following article is in reply to two contributions to the current internal discussion in the world Trotskyist movement—one by Comrade Livio Maitan, "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America—Defense of an Orientation and a Method," and the other by Comrades Ernest Germain and Martine Knoeller, "The Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists in Latin America."¹

I have proceeded on the assumption that comrades will have just read or reread these two contributions and will therefore have the arguments freshly in mind. Since these and my attempted answers are often rather involved, it will perhaps be helpful to indicate the main points I propose to discuss.

The two contributions share a basic position—defense of a "turn" adopted at the last world congress; namely, an orientation toward the "strategy" of armed struggle or guerrilla warfare.

I will seek to show that this orientation—contrary to the contentions of the authors of the two contributions—does not represent a continuation of the views of Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky on guerrilla warfare. Instead, it stands in contrast to their views and represents a departure from their strategy of building a mass revolutionary socialist combat party.

I will go into the origin of the position of the authors of the two documents and cite further evidence in an effort to prove that their position represents an adaptation to ultraleftism, that this has already had bad repercussions in our movement internationally, and that it could prove dangerous to the future of the Fourth International if persisted in.

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In addition, I will try to show that in the discussion now taking place in the vanguard in Latin America and elsewhere on the subject of the defeats suffered by the protagonists of guerrilla warfare in the past decade and the need to find something more effective, the majority position places us at a disadvantage in presenting the program of Trotskyism, and even plays into the hands of conscious anti-Leninists.

In passing, I will try to take up all the main arguments presented in the two documents even though this will take us down some side roads and require us to examine a number of exhibits from history. One of the more important items will be an exploration of the reasons for the persistence of certain errors, including the "strategy" of guerrilla warfare.

I will also take up the contention of the majority that no "alternative line" to theirs has been proposed. The truth is, as I will try to show, the majority displaced the previously held alternative line, voting for a new "orientation and method" of guerrilla warfare without drawing a proper balance sheet of the experience in Latin America and elsewhere with respect to the defeats suffered by this strategy, and without a concrete projection of what can be expected to result from the new line.

Without drawing any sharp line between the two documents, which are repetitious in some respects, I have divided my reply into two parts, one for each of the contributions. This division was intended, among other things, to facilitate pointing up the origin of the new orientation and some of the first consequences of applying it.

I.

In Reply to Comrade Maitan

Comrade Maitan's Contentions

Brushing aside what the test of events has shown, Comrade Maitan reaffirms his support of the resolution passed at the last world congress in favor of guerrilla warfare.

The tone he has adopted and the new arguments he advances would indicate that he is persuaded that the best defense is to take the offensive. He implies that quite belatedly I reopened the discussion with the article I wrote last summer, "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America."² By way of reply, Comrade Maitan argues as follows:

1. Factual inaccuracies, misreadings or misunderstandings, and flaws in reasoning are to be found in the criticisms I raised in my article.

2. If the situations in Bolivia and Peru—as I contended in my article—changed in a way not expected by the delegates at the last world congress who voted for the resolution on Latin America sponsored by Comrade Maitan and others, the possibility of such reversals was at least referred to in the resolution; and while the alteration occurred with quite unforeseen speed, Comrade Maitan is prepared to make his self-criticism on this.

Still, nothing in Latin America changed in such a way as to require any considerable modification of the basic orientation adopted by the majority at the last world congress—namely, centering the activities of the Trotskyist movement on preparing for rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period (while being ready to shift to urban guerrilla warfare, if this appears feasible, and while not excluding other forms of armed struggle of even more efficacious nature, however unlikely the perspective for these may appear to be at the moment).

3. In Argentina, Comrade Maitan is compelled to admit, things went badly. However, this had nothing to do with the "turn" adopted by the last world congress, which remains valid what-

ever actually happened. The comrades on the scene made serious errors.

4. In Bolivia, where another bad defeat was suffered, it does not matter. The comrades on the scene applied the line correctly. Circumstances beyond their control caused the defeat. If anything their experience further confirms the correctness of the line of the last world congress, inasmuch as defeats are often a precious source of lessons for the revolutionary movement.

5. The criticisms offered by me are to be understood as deriving from a scholastic approach that offers lip service to the idea of armed struggle while denying it in practice—in the tradition extending from Karl Kautsky to Rodney Arismendi; that is, from the centrist ideologist of the Second International to the Uruguayan Stalinist leader who seeks to straddle the line dividing those who favor armed struggle from those who favor peaceful coexistence.³

6. Guerrilla warfare is a specific form of armed struggle, of the art of insurrection, backed by the full authority of our Marxist teachers. The beginnings are to be found in the writings of Engels. Lenin developed these beginnings more concretely, "even giving specific advice on makeup and technical education of partisan detachments." Trotsky approved of engaging in guerrilla warfare under certain circumstances. What Comrade Maitan and those who agree with him are doing is filling in the outlines so admirably anticipated by the great Marxist masters.

The contentions advanced by Comrade Maitan obviously vary in weight and importance. To find a frame within which they may be judged most fruitfully, I propose not to follow his sequence, but to begin by taking his strongest argument—his appeal to authority.

Engels on Guerrilla Warfare

Comrade Maitan brings in Engels on four items: (1) That Engels studied military questions very seriously. (2) That Engels held insurrection to be an art, subject to certain practical rules. (3) That Engels never changed his opinion on the central point, armed insurrection. (4) That in his letters, Engels "alluded several times to guerrilla warfare, notably with regard to the American Civil War and Poland. He noted, among other things, that geographical conditions were not sufficient for the development of guerrilla warfare if the social conditions were lacking."⁴

Up to now, I do not know of anyone in the Trotskyist move-

ment who has ever disputed these points. What bearing they have in the current discussion remains a mystery.

On the other hand, it takes but little reading of Engels to find that he did not advocate a "strategy" of guerrilla warfare. He considered it an auxiliary in the field of war, or a phenomenon, hardly of major importance, observable or to be expected at certain phases in a war.

Comrade Maitan really ought to admit that Engels was neither a practitioner nor a theoretician of guerrilla war as a strategy for winning a revolution, particularly rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period on a continental scale.

Lenin's 1906 Experience

In appealing to Lenin, Comrade Maitan refers the reader to three articles. I will provide the precise sources in English to facilitate finding them: "The Political Strike and the Street Fighting in Moscow," dated October 17, 1905 (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 9, pp. 347-55); "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising," dated August 29, 1906 (*ibid.*, vol. 11, pp. 171-78); "Guerrilla Warfare," dated September 30, 1906 (*ibid.*, pp. 213-24).⁵

It is important, in my opinion, to read these articles in connection with the current discussion, not simply to place Comrade Maitan's quotations in context, but to be able to judge more accurately whether the lessons to be drawn from these articles speak for or against the position adopted at the last world congress.

First, of all, on *method*, a question raised by Comrade Maitan in the title of his article. Although he never explains in his text precisely what he means by "method," he does cite Lenin on the necessity to be concrete. It is a very good quotation, deserving to be repeated somewhat more fully than the version provided by Comrade Maitan.

Let us begin from the beginning. What are the fundamental demands which every Marxist should make of an examination of the question of forms of struggle? In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It recognises the most varied forms of struggle; and it does not "concoct" them, but only generalises, organises, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an

attentive attitude to the *mass* struggle in progress, which as the movement develops, as the class-consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defence and attack. Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle possible and in existence at the given moment only, recognising as it does that new forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, *inevitably* arise as the given social situation changes. In this respect Marxism *learns*, if we may so express it, from mass practice, and makes no claim whatever to *teach* the masses forms of struggle invented by "systematisers" in the seclusion of their studies. We know—said Kautsky, for instance, when examining the forms of social revolution—that the coming crisis will introduce new forms of struggle that we are now unable to foresee.

In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely *historical* examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism. At different stages of economic evolution, depending on differences in political, national-cultural, living and other conditions, different forms of struggle come to the fore and become the principal forms of struggle; and in connection with this, the secondary, auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in their turn. To attempt to answer yes or no to the question whether any particular means of struggle should be used, without making a detailed examination of the concrete situation of the given movement at the given stage of its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist position.⁶

This is the dialectical method, as stated by Lenin, that Marxists must follow in considering new forms of struggle, such as the *tactic* of guerrilla warfare developed by the Russian masses themselves in a great revolutionary upsurge that had placed the struggle for power by the proletariat on the agenda as an immediate issue facing the revolutionary party.

Nowhere in the balance of his article examining the various facets of this new "auxiliary" form of struggle does Lenin so much as hint at the idea of adopting guerrilla warfare as a *strategy* or as "an orientation and a method" as Comrade Maitan does. Quite the contrary:

In a period of civil war the ideal party of the proletariat is a *fighting party*. This is absolutely incontrovertible. We are quite prepared to grant that it is possible to argue and prove the *inexpediency* from the standpoint of civil war of particular forms of civil war at any particular

moment. We fully admit criticism of diverse forms of civil war from the standpoint of *military expediency* and absolutely agree that in *this* question it is the Social-Democratic practical workers in each particular locality who must have the final say.⁷

Even further:

I can understand us refraining from Party leadership of *this* spontaneous struggle in a particular place or at a particular time because of the weakness and unpreparedness of our organization. I realise that this question must be settled by the local practical workers, and that the remoulding of weak and unprepared organisations is no easy matter.⁸

In fact, Lenin stated flatly:

It is said that guerrilla warfare brings the class-conscious proletarians into close association with degraded, drunken riff-raff. That is true. But it only means that *the party of the proletariat can never regard guerrilla warfare as the only, or even as the chief, method of struggle*; it means that this method must be subordinated to other methods, that it must be commensurate with the chief methods of warfare, and must be ennobled by the enlightening and organising influence of socialism.⁹

What Was the Concrete Situation?

First of all, Lenin said, Marxism learns from the masses; it does not *teach* the masses forms of struggle invented by "systematisers." "In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely *historical* examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism."

The same stricture applies, in my opinion, to the positions taken by our Marxist teachers. If we do not consider those positions in the light of the concrete historical situation, we can open ourselves to the charge of failing to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism. Comrade Maitan may not be open to such a charge inasmuch as he refers us to articles by Lenin that enable us, in connection with other articles written by him in those years, to ascertain the concrete situation in 1905-07 in Russia for ourselves. It is to be hoped that every comrade in the world Trotskyist movement will take the trouble to do this.

One of the rewards may be some clues toward solving a tantalizing mystery. In combing through the works of Lenin for

statements that might be cited in association with his own position, however badly they fitted, why was Comrade Maitan able to find so little outside of what Lenin wrote in 1906?

After all, Lenin lived for another eighteen years, didn't he? His interest in the ways and means of winning a revolution remained unflagging, didn't it? Why did he write so little, then, on guerrilla war even as an "auxiliary" form of struggle "subordinated to other methods"?

The context in which Lenin considered the question in 1906 was a great revolutionary mass upsurge that proceeded from "a strike and demonstrations to isolated barricades"; from "isolated barricades to the mass erection of barricades and street fighting against the troops. Over the heads of the organisations, the mass proletarian struggle developed from a strike to an uprising."¹⁰

In this immense mass uprising, in which soviets were formed that came under the leadership of Trotsky, it appeared possible to win power. This confronted the revolutionary party with the immediate problem, among others, of organizing the military side of the insurrection. One of the factors in this was guerrilla war, which flared without the Bolsheviks having taken the initiative in it.

Lenin, weighing this development, concluded that guerrilla war should be viewed as an auxiliary form of struggle within the context of the "classical" pattern of a revolution headed by a working class fighting for power under the leadership of a revolutionary socialist party.

Since Comrade Maitan considers this "classical" pattern to be the least likely to occur in Latin America in the coming period, one can gauge how far he stretches things in appealing to Lenin for authority on making guerrilla war the main orientation.

Lenin did not draw up a balance sheet on the party's involvement in guerrilla war. He did, however, draw up a balance sheet of the period in which this occurred. Strange as it may seem from Comrade Maitan's standpoint, Lenin did this by taking up a different "auxiliary" form of struggle—the active boycott of the elections which the Bolsheviks had called for, and which to them was the counterpart in the electoral arena to opening up armed struggle in the extraparlimentary field. As is well known, the revolutionary upsurge died down, and by 1907, when new elections were set, Lenin proposed participating in them.¹¹ His article of June 26, 1907, "Against Boycott," includes his balance sheet of the previous period:

"Two phases in the development of the Russian revolution now

stand out before us in all their clarity: the phase of upswing (1905) and the phase of decline (1906-07)."¹² It follows from this that Lenin had misjudged the situation somewhat in 1906 when he wrote "Guerrilla Warfare." He had not seen that the ebb had already set in. His article "Against Boycott" was intended, as he indicates, to make a rectification of this misjudgment:

We have already pointed out above that the condition for the success of the boycott of 1905 was a sweeping, universal, powerful, and rapid upswing of the revolution. We must now examine, in the first place, what bearing a specially powerful upswing of the struggle has on the boycott, and, secondly, what the characteristic and distinctive features of a specially powerful upswing are.

Boycott, as we have already stated, is a struggle not within the framework of a given institution, but against its emergence. Any given institution can be derived only from the already existing, i.e., the old, regime. Consequently, the boycott is a means of struggle aimed directly at overthrowing the old regime, or, at the worst, i.e., when the assault is not strong enough for overthrow, at weakening it to such an extent that it would be unable to set up that institution, unable to make it operate.

Lenin adds a footnote here:

Reference everywhere in the text is to active boycott, that is, not just a refusal to take part in the institutions of the old regime, but an attack upon this regime. Readers who are not familiar with Social-Democratic literature of the period of the Bulygin Duma boycott should be reminded that the Social-Democrats spoke openly at the time about *active* boycott, sharply contrasting it to passive boycott, and even linking it with an armed uprising.

He continues:

Consequently, to be successful the boycott requires a direct struggle against the old regime, an uprising against it and mass disobedience to it in a large number of cases (such mass disobedience is one of the conditions for preparing an uprising). Boycott is a refusal to recognise the old regime, a refusal, of course, not in words, but in deeds, i.e., it is something that finds expression not only in cries or the slogans of organisations, but in a definite movement of the *mass of the people*, who systematically defy the laws of the old regime, systematically set up new institutions, which, though unlawful, actually exist, and so on and so forth. The connection between boycott and the broad revolutionary upswing is thus obvious: boycott is the most decisive means of struggle, which rejects not the form of organisation of the given institution, but its

very existence. Boycott is a declaration of open war against the old regime, a direct attack upon it. Unless there is a broad revolutionary upswing, unless there is mass unrest which overflows, as it were, the bounds of the old legality, there can be no question of the boycott succeeding.¹³

Ended along with the boycott, of course, was its complement, engaging in technical preparations for an armed uprising. Why didn't Lenin draw up a balance sheet on the "auxiliary" form of struggle, guerrilla warfare? He had reason to find the question embarrassing, as we shall see.

How Trotsky Viewed Lenin's Stand

A balance sheet in historical retrospect exists nonetheless. The author of the balance sheet is Leon Trotsky and it is to be found in his biography of Stalin.

In view of its pertinence to the discussion now being conducted in the Fourth International, and the fact that the leaders of the majority position on this question have not mentioned it up to now, I take the liberty of quoting it in its entirety despite its length.

Trotsky has just referred to the period of reaction following the defeat of the 1905 revolution. He continues:

Terror from above was supplemented by terror from below. [The fight of] the routed insurrectionists continued convulsively for a long time in the form of scattered local explosions, guerrilla raids, group and individual terrorist acts. The course of the revolution was characterized with remarkable clarity by statistics of the terror. 233 persons were assassinated in 1905; 768 in 1906; 1,231 in 1907. The number of wounded showed a somewhat different ratio, since the terrorists were learning to be better shots. The terrorist wave reached its crest in 1907. "There were days," wrote a liberal observer, "when several big acts of terror were accompanied by as many as scores of minor attempts and assassinations of lower rank officialdom . . . Bomb laboratories were established in all cities, the bombs destroying some of their careless makers . . ." and the like. Krassin's alchemy became strongly democratized.¹⁴

On the whole, the three-year period from 1905 through 1907 is particularly notable for both terrorist acts and strikes. But what stands out is the divergence between their statistical records: while the number of strikers fell off rapidly from year to year, the number of terrorist acts mounted with equal rapidity. Clearly, individual terrorism increased as the mass movement declined. Yet terrorism could not grow stronger indefinitely.

The impetus unleashed by the revolution was bound to spend itself in terrorism as it had spent itself in other spheres. Indeed, while there were 1,231 assassinations in 1907, they dropped to 400 in 1908 and to about a hundred in 1909. The growing percentage of the merely wounded indicated, moreover, that now the shooting was being done by untrained amateurs, mostly by callow youngsters.

In the Caucasus, with its romantic traditions of highway robbery and gory feuds still very much alive, guerrilla warfare found any number of fearless practitioners. More than a thousand terrorist acts of all kinds were perpetrated in Transcaucasia alone during 1905-1907, the years of the First Revolution. Fighting detachments found also a great spread of activity in the Urals, under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, and in Poland under the banner of the P.P.S. (Polish Socialist Party). On the second of August, 1906, scores of policemen and soldiers were assassinated on the streets of Warsaw and other Polish cities. According to the explanation of the leaders, the purpose of these attacks was "to bolster the revolutionary mood of the proletariat." The leader of these leaders was Joseph Pilsudski, the future "liberator" of Poland, and its oppressor.¹⁵ Commenting on the Warsaw events, Lenin wrote: "We advise the numerous fighting groups of our Party to terminate their inactivity and to initiate some guerrilla operations . . ." "And these appeals of the Bolshevik leaders," commented General Spiridovich, "were not without issue, despite the countermanding action of the [Menshevik] Central Committee."

Of great moment in the sanguine encounters of the terrorists with the police was the question of money, the sinews of any war, including civil war. Prior to the Constitutional Manifesto of 1905 the revolutionary movement was financed principally by the liberal bourgeoisie and by the radical intellectuals. That was true also in the case of the Bolsheviks, whom the liberal opposition then regarded as merely somewhat bolder revolutionary democrats. But when the bourgeoisie shifted its hopes to the future Duma, it began to regard the revolutionists as an obstacle in the way of coming to terms with the monarchy. That change of front struck a powerful blow at the finances of the revolution. Lockouts and unemployment stopped the intake of money from the workers. In the meantime, the revolutionary organizations had developed large political machines with their own printshops, publishing houses, staffs of agitators, and, finally, fighting detachments in constant need of armaments. Under the circumstances, there was no way to continue financing the revolution except by securing the wherewithal by force. The initiative, as almost always, came from below. The first expropriations went off rather peacefully, quite often with a tacit understanding between the "expropriators" and the employees of the expropriated institutions. There was the story of the clerks in the Nadezhda Insurance Company reassuring the faltering expropriators with the words, "Don't worry, comrades!" But this idyllic period did not last long. Following the bourgeoisie, the intellectu-

als, including the self-same bank clerks, drifted away from the revolution. Police measures became more stringent. Casualties increased on both sides. Deprived of support and sympathy, the "fighting organizations" quickly went up in smoke or just as quickly disintegrated.

A typical picture of how even the most disciplined detachments degenerated is given in his memoirs by the already-cited Samoilov,¹⁶ the former Duma deputy of the Ivanovo-Voznesensk textile workers. The detachment, acting originally "under the directives of the Party Center," began to "misbehave" during the second half of 1906. When it offered the Party only a part of the money it had stolen at a factory (having killed the cashier during the act), the Party Committee refused it flatly and reprimanded the fighters. But it was already too late; they were disintegrating rapidly and soon descended to "bandit attacks of the most ordinary criminal type." Always having large sums of money, the fighters began to preoccupy themselves with carousing, in the course of which they often fell into the hands of the police. Thus, little by little, the entire fighting detachment came to an ignominious end. "We must, however, admit," writes Samoilov, "that in its ranks were not a few . . . genuinely devoted comrades who were loyal to the cause of the revolution and some with hearts as pure as crystal . . ."

The original purpose of the fighting organizations was to assume leadership of the rebellious masses, teaching them how to use arms and how to deliver the most telling blows at the enemy. The main, if not the only, theoretician in that field of endeavor was Lenin. After the December Insurrection was crushed,¹⁷ the new problem was what to do about the fighting organizations. Lenin came to the Stockholm Congress with the draft of a resolution,¹⁸ which, while giving due credit to guerrilla activities as the inevitable continuation of the December Insurrection and as part of the preparation for the impending major offensive against Tsarism, allowed the so-called expropriations of financial means "under the control of the Party." But the Bolsheviks withdrew this resolution of theirs under the pressure of disagreement in their own midst. By a majority of sixty-four votes to four, with twenty not voting, the Menshevik resolution was passed, which categorically forbade "expropriations" of private persons and institutions, while tolerating the seizure of state finances only in the event that organs of revolutionary government were set up in a given locality; that is, only in direct connection with a popular uprising. The twenty-four delegates who either abstained from voting or voted against this resolution made up the Leninist irreconcilable half of the Bolshevik faction.

In the extensive printed report about the Stockholm Congress,¹⁹ Lenin avoided mention of the resolution concerning armed acts altogether, on the grounds that he was not present during the discussion. "Besides, it is, of course, not a question of principle." It is hardly possible that Lenin's absence was accidental: he simply did not want to have his hands tied. Similarly, a year later at the London Congress,²⁰ Lenin, who as chairman

was obliged to be present during the discussion on the question of expropriations, did not vote, in spite of violent protests from the Menshevik benches. The London resolution categorically forbade expropriations and ordered dissolution of the Party's "fighting organizations."

It was not, of course, a matter of abstract morality. All classes and all parties approached the problem of assassination not from the point of view of the Biblical commandment but from the vantage point of the historical interests represented. When the Pope and his cardinals blessed the arms of Franco none of the conservative statesmen suggested that they be imprisoned for inciting murders. Official moralists come out against violence when the violence in question is revolutionary. On the contrary, whoever really fights against class oppression, must perforce acknowledge revolution. Whoever, acknowledges revolution, acknowledges civil war. Finally, "guerrilla warfare is an inescapable form of struggle . . . whenever more or less extensive intervals occur between major engagements in a civil war." [Lenin.] From the point of view of the general principles of the class struggle, all of that was quite irrefutable. Disagreements came with the evaluation of concrete historical circumstances. When two major battles of the civil war are separated from each other by two or three months, that interval will inevitably be filled in with guerrilla blows against the enemy. But when the "intermission" is stretched out over years, guerrilla war ceases to be a preparation for a new battle and becomes instead a mere convulsion after defeat. It is, of course, not easy to determine the moment of the break.

Questions of Boycottism and of guerrilla activities were closely interrelated. It is permissible to boycott representative assemblies only in the event that the mass movement is sufficiently strong either to overthrow them or to ignore them. But when the masses are in retreat, the tactic of the boycott loses its revolutionary meaning. Lenin understood that and explained it better than others. As early as 1906 he repudiated the boycott of the Duma. After the coup of June third, 1907,²¹ he led a resolute fight against the Boycottists precisely because the high-tide had been succeeded by the ebb-tide. It was self-evident that guerrilla activities had become sheer anarchism when it was necessary to utilize even the arena of Tsarist "parliamentarism" in order to prepare the ground for the mobilization of the masses. At the crest of the civil war guerrilla activities augmented and stimulated the mass movement; in the period of reaction they attempted to replace it, but, as a matter of fact, merely embarrassed the Party and speeded its disintegration. Olmsky,²² one of the more noticeable of Lenin's companions-in-arms, shed critical light on that period from the perspective of Soviet times. "Not a few of the fine youth," he wrote, "perished on the gibbet; others degenerated; still others were disappointed in the revolution. At the same time people at large began to confound revolutionists with ordinary bandits. Later, when the revival of the revolutionary labor movement began, that revival was slowest in those cities where 'exes' [expropriations—J.H.] had been most numerous. (As an example, I might name Baku and Saratov.)"²³

Long as this quotation is, it still does not complete Trotsky's balance sheet. Further on, in the same chapter, he considers a specific incident, the Tiflis expropriation of June 12, 1907:²⁴

The Tiflis expropriations could in no way be regarded as a guerrilla clash between two battles in a civil war. Lenin could not help but see that the insurrection had been shoved ahead into the hazy future. As far as he was concerned, the problem consisted this time only of a simple attempt to assure financial means to the Party at the expense of the enemy, for the impending period of uncertainty. Lenin could not resist the temptation, took advantage of a favorable opportunity, of a happy "exception." In that sense, one must say outright that the idea of the Tiflis expropriation contained in it a goodly element of adventurism, which, as a rule, was foreign to Lenin's politics. The case with Stalin was different. Broad historical considerations had little value in his eyes. The resolution of the London Congress was only an irksome scrap of paper, to be nullified by means of a crude trick. Success would justify the risk. Souvarine argues that it is not fair to shift responsibility from the leader of the faction to a secondary figure.²⁵ There is no question here of shifting responsibility. At the time, the majority of the Bolshevik faction was opposed to Lenin on the question of expropriations. The Bolsheviks, in direct contact with the fighting detachments, had extremely convincing observations of their own, which Lenin, again an emigrant, did not have. Without corrections from below, the leader of the greatest genius is bound to make crude errors. The fact remains that Stalin was not among those who understood the inadmissibility of guerrilla actions under conditions of revolutionary retreat. And that was no accident. To him the Party was first of all a machine. The machine required financial means in order to exist. The financial means could be obtained with the aid of another machine, independent of life and of the struggle of the masses. There Stalin was in his own element.

The consequences of this tragic adventure, which rounded out an entire phase of Party life, were rather serious. The fight over the Tiflis expropriation poisoned relations inside the Party and inside the Bolshevik faction itself for a long time to come. From then on, Lenin changed fronts and came out more resolutely than ever against the tactic of expropriations, which for a time became the heritage of the "Left" Wing among the Bolsheviks. For the last time the Tiflis "affair" was officially reviewed by the Party Central Committee in January, 1910, upon the insistence of the Mensheviks. The resolution sharply condemned expropriation as an inadmissible violation of Party discipline, while conceding that rendering harm to the labor movement was not the intention of the participants, who had been "guided solely by a faulty understanding of Party interests." No one was expelled. No one was mentioned by name. Koba was thus amnestied along with others, as one who had been guided by "a faulty understanding of Party interests."²⁶

What About the Transitional Program?

The above quotations are taken from one of the chapters of the Stalin biography that were completed by Trotsky before he was assassinated in 1940. The views expressed by Trotsky in this chapter undoubtedly represent his final thinking on the subject of guerrilla warfare.

No doubt this accounts for the fact that in the Transitional Program, which he wrote in 1938, Trotsky does not even mention guerrilla warfare, still less rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period on a continental scale.

The section in the Transitional Program concerning transitional steps to be considered in defending the gains of the working class against fascist attack and the counterrevolution in general speaks throughout in terms of the masses and their organizations.

"Only armed workers' detachments, who feel the support of tens of millions of toilers behind them," writes Trotsky, "can successfully prevail against the fascist bands."²⁷ *Tens of millions of toilers behind them!* Trotsky continues:

The struggle against fascism does not start in the liberal editorial office but in the factory—and ends in the street. Scabs and private gunmen in factory plants are the basic nuclei of the fascist army. *Strike pickets* are the basic nuclei of the proletarian army. This is our point of departure. In connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity of creating *workers' groups for self-defense*. It is necessary to write this slogan into the program of the revolutionary wing of the trade unions. It is imperative everywhere possible, beginning with the youth groups, to organize groups for self-defense, to drill and acquaint them with the use of arms.²⁸

From this point of departure, further developments hinge on the course of the mass movement:

A new upsurge of the mass movement should serve not only to increase the number of these units but also to unite them according to neighborhoods, cities, regions. It is necessary to give organized expression to the valid hatred of the workers toward scabs and bands of gangsters and fascists. It is necessary to advance the slogan of a *workers' militia* as the one serious guarantee for the inviolability of workers' organizations, meetings, and press.²⁹

The culmination of this process is *the arming of the proletariat* as an imperative concomitant element of the struggle for libera-

tion. "When the proletariat wills it, it will find the road and the means to arming. In this field, also, the leadership falls naturally to the sections of the Fourth International."³⁰

In appealing to authority for justification of the orientation toward guerrilla warfare, Comrade Maitan quoted only two sentences from the Transitional Program. Is it necessary, in the light of the evidence, to point out what liberties he has taken with Trotsky's thought on this question in order to bring him into the camp of the strategists of guerrilla warfare?

The Reunification Document

In thumbing through the texts in search of quotations, it is curious that Comrade Maitan decided not to use one of much more recent date. This is the point included in the statement of principles upon which the major groupings in the world Trotskyist movement succeeded in achieving reunification in 1963 after a split that had lasted almost a decade. The point is as follows:

13. Along the road of a revolution beginning with simple democratic demands and ending in the rupture of capitalist property relations, guerrilla warfare conducted by landless peasant and semiproletarian forces, under a leadership that becomes committed to carrying the revolution through to a conclusion, can play a decisive role in undermining and precipitating the downfall of a colonial or semicolonial power. This is one of the main lessons to be drawn from experience since the Second World War. It must be consciously incorporated into the strategy of building revolutionary Marxist parties in colonial countries.³¹

Until Comrade Maitan chooses to explain why he left out this reference, one can only speculate as to his reasons.

Perhaps his main consideration was that the stand taken by the Reunification Congress on this question stood in the way of the guerrilla war orientation he came to adopt.

1. The Reunification Congress placed utilization of guerrilla action on the plane of tactics, within the general strategy of building a revolutionary Marxist party.

2. The Reunification Congress confined utilization of the tactic to the "colonial countries."

An additional consideration, which Comrade Maitan may have had in mind in deciding not to cite this document, was that it was drawn up and submitted to the world Trotskyist movement as a principled basis for its reunification by the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. The inclusion of point 13 shows that

the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party recognized the role played by guerrilla warfare after World War II in countries like Cuba. This fact does not fit in with the thesis that the SWP leaders belong to the line of "classical centrism from Kautsky in 1910 to Rodney Arismendi" rather than the classical line of revolutionary socialism running from Engels to Leon Trotsky in 1940.

Comrade Maitan appealed to authority in an effort to bolster his position. The effort was counterproductive. Our Marxist teachers were unanimous in regarding guerrilla warfare as a tactical question, at best an "auxiliary" form of struggle within the general strategy of building a revolutionary party, at worst tragic adventurism that could deal heavy damage to the party and set back the revolutionary movement as a whole. In short, they speak for the position maintained by the minority at the last world congress.

A Question of Methodology

Upon completing his selection of quotations, Comrade Maitan states his general conclusion:

From my brief review of the conceptions of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, I obviously do not draw the conclusion that the orientation of armed struggle we are proposing for this stage in Latin America flows automatically from these conceptions. That would in fact be using the method we reject as scholastic. Our concern is to emphasize that our conceptions and criteria are part and parcel of the approach of the masters of revolutionary Marxism and no one can accuse us of any ultraleft-tinted revisionism. We are drawing on the generalizations, outlines, and even some extremely valuable anticipations of the past. Our task is to fill in these outlines with a concrete content in the specific conditions under which we are struggling now.³²

From the standpoint of methodology, this is a revealing paragraph. Comrade Maitan states that the orientation he is proposing for this stage in Latin America does not flow automatically from the conceptions developed by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky.

I would agree on that, and add that neither does the orientation proposed by the minority flow "automatically" from those conceptions. The orientation, even though reached within the general frame of the conceptions developed by our Marxist teachers, *must be checked against the reality.*

But that is not all. As dialectical materialists we must ascertain

how any changes in the reality affect the conceptions developed by our Marxist teachers.

Thus in proposing a change in orientation as far-reaching as the one voted for by the majority at the last world congress, the proponents of that change were duty-bound to state how our Marxist teachers viewed the question of guerrilla warfare and how their conclusions should be modified. This was required in order to maintain the continuity of Marxist theory on this question.

But the comrades of the majority did not do this in preparing their documents for the congress, nor did they do it at the congress. It is now—*after the change in orientation* and under pressure from the challenge of the minority—that Comrade Maitan turns his attention to this task; and we see that he begins in a most unpromising way. He does not even provide a correct presentation of the views of our Marxist teachers.

To be noted additionally in his general conclusion cited above is that having explained that his orientation does not flow “automatically” from the conceptions of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky, Comrade Maitan almost immediately qualifies what he has said in such a way as to leave us in doubt. According to him, the method followed in reaching the majority orientation on guerrilla warfare was to draw on “generalizations, outlines, and even some extremely valuable anticipations” and to “fill” them with “a concrete content” taken from the current situation in Latin America. In other words, you set up an empty mold and fill it with material lying at hand.

What if you make a mistake in choosing the “outlines”? Then the corresponding selection of “concrete content” will automatically be wrong. Has Comrade Maitan permitted us to glimpse the method that led him into his mistaken orientation? If so, he himself has provided us with the label—it is *scholastic*.

From Brazil, a Telling Example

The question of the relationship between the guerrilla orientation and the Leninist theory and practice of party building is not confined to our own ranks. It presents a formidable problem for us on a world scale in relation to other currents that have their own theoreticians. I will cite an example that deserves the closest attention.

The November 15, 1970, issue of the *New York Times Magazine* printed an article by Sanche de Gramont entitled “How One

Pleasant, Scholarly Young Man From Brazil Became a Kidnaping, Gun-Toting, Bombing Revolutionary." The article was based on an interview in Algiers with Ladislav Dowbor, one of the leaders of the Popular Revolutionary Vanguard (VPR), who was captured by the São Paulo police on April 21, 1970, tortured, and released two months later on June 14, along with thirty-nine other guerrilla fighters, in return for the release of the kidnapped West German Ambassador von Holleben. At the age of twenty-six, Dowbor, an economist of Polish ancestry, became converted in 1967 to the view of Carlos Marighella. As is known, Marighella was not a *foquista*, nor is Dowbor.³³

Gramont said of Dowbor: "He gives the impression of being a theoretician, who although lacking any aptitude or liking for violent action, has willed himself to participate in the operations of armed groups because they conform with his analysis of the situation in Brazil."

The article quoted Dowbor extensively, placing particular emphasis on his theories. "As Ladislav Dowbor . . . explained the process," said Gramont, "the decision to deal exclusively in armed actions was not impetuous or improvised, but the result of a careful political analysis."

Here are some of Dowbor's points:

You cannot build the revolutionary consciousness of a population through political explanations. But military actions can create this consciousness. . . .

When we invest a factory and force the manager who is two weeks late with salaries to pay his men, we provoke the army, the police, the press and the clergy into taking positions against us and in support of the visible enemy. It is then that the workers are able to identify the system as an enemy.

The police have to demonstrate to the bourgeoisie that they are doing their job, and so they organize a repression. "The workers see the police and the army and the press working together and come to recognize that the enemy is not individual but social. And that is already a form of class consciousness."

Dowbor has done some reading. That he has read accurately can be judged from the following:

Now, this method of creating class consciousness through armed action is very different from the methods that Lenin developed for the creation of a workers' party. If you are mainly concerned with organizing the masses, you address yourself to those classes that are most capable of

being organized, like labor, large groups of men with identical interests who are easy to reach. But armed action, which means living in small, clandestine cells, reduces the possibility of contact with the population. We must rely on the repercussions of our actions. If it is a violent action, it will appeal to those parts of the population that are sensitive to violence—that is, the marginal masses, the unemployed, the *favelados*.³⁴ Tactically, when you perform an armed action, you don't limit yourself to the interests of one class. You are reaching the masses not through political cells or speeches or pamphlets, but through the *fait accompli* of violent action. We are not telling them, look, it's better for you to organize a strike against your oppressors, we are saying, here is what we have done against the system. This makes us a mobilization movement, not an organizational movement.

It is clear enough from this explanation that Dowbor, after studying Lenin's theory of party building, believes that it has been superseded. He explains:

Another advantage of small, radical military groups is that it solves the Leninist problem of how to remain in the vanguard, ahead of the masses. Classical Communist parties run the risk of being outflanked by their own rank and file, but we remain far ahead of the masses by the very nature of our struggle. With us, it is not the masses that fight, but the political elite.

Such an elite, of course, has its own problems—to which its theoreticians have addressed themselves: "We run the risk of isolating ourselves from the masses, since we are fighting and they are not. That is why we do not attempt political education. We do not lecture on socialism or other theories the masses won't understand. Our attacks against the visible enemy are immediately understood."

It is not my intention to suggest that Comrade Maitan shares Dowbor's views. In the current discussion in our movement, Comrade Maitan's contributions are studded with affirmations on the need for party building and the need to avoid becoming isolated from the masses. What I do suggest is that guerrilla fighters of a serious theoretical turn of mind like Dowbor would only laugh at the suggestion that the Trotskyists, in deciding at their last world congress to orient toward guerrilla war, took a general outline provided by Lenin and simply filled it with a concrete content to be found in the current situation in Latin America. They don't need rationalizations of that kind to bolster their own views.

To argue convincingly against the theory espoused by Dowbor, it is necessary to begin by explaining why the Leninist theory of organizing a mass revolutionary socialist party remains completely valid today. As against Dowbor's theory, which elevates guerrilla warfare into a strategy, it is necessary to *demote* guerrilla warfare to its proper place; that is, to a tactical level. In this context, Comrade Maitan's repeated references to his record in opposing Debrayism are beside the point.³⁵ The Dowbors, who exist in other countries besides Brazil, are not Debrayists. In fact, Dowbor explained to the correspondent of the *New York Times* that one of the basic principles of his movement "was a refutation of the so-called *foco* . . . theory of Régis Debray. . . ."

The Theory of the Tupamaros

The Tupamaros hold similar views.³⁶ They consider the work of formulating a program and of building a mass party to have been superseded. Their fundamental view is that "revolutionary action in itself . . . generates revolutionary consciousness, organisation and conditions."³⁷

As an example, they cite Cuba: "Instead of the long process of the formation of a mass party, a guerrilla foco is installed with a dozen men and this generates consciousness, organisation and revolutionary conditions which culminate in a true Revolution."³⁸

They hold this position very firmly: "The basic principles of a socialist Revolution are given and tried out in countries like Cuba, and there's no need to discuss it more. It's enough to stick to those principles, and show—by deeds—the path of insurrection to achieve their application."³⁹

This contempt for the revolutionary theory and practice of Leninism is fostered by one of the peculiarities of Uruguay of which the Tupamaros are very much aware: "Our armed forces, some 12,000 men [they mean the armed forces of the state], weakly armed and trained are one of the weakest repressive apparatuses in Latin America."⁴⁰

It is instructive that the Tupamaros do not involve themselves in debating over theories as to the relative merits of the variants of guerrilla warfare. Insofar as they display concern for theory, it touches only the key issue separating them from Leninism—that is, the role of a combat party. As they see it, it is sufficient for twelve men to begin exemplary actions of an insurrectional nature and the rest will follow.

What Ciro Bustos Learned from Che Guevara

Another example, this time from Bolivia, will enable us to bring the problem into still sharper focus. The example has the additional advantage that it concerns a *foquista*, therefore a *guerrillerista* easily answered by Comrade Maitan. It is no one less than Ciro Bustos, who was imprisoned along with Régis Debray on charges of having participated in the guerrilla front opened in Bolivia by Che Guevara.

Bustos, upon being released from prison, went to Chile, since owing to the repression under the Levingston government he could not go to his native country of Argentina.⁴¹ An interview with him was published in the February 2, 1971, issue of *Punto Final*.

In the interview, Ciro Bustos made clear that throughout his imprisonment in Camiri, Bolivia, he successfully maintained the guise of not being a guerrilla fighter, of being instead a "simple gull" who had been "taken in" by the guerrillas. He did this at first in order to help protect his comrades. Once begun, he was compelled to continue the role, to his "disgust."

The truth is, however, that he was and remains a convinced guerrilla fighter, an advocate of *foquismo*, meaning by this "a revolutionary nucleus in action, installed in a definite zone. . . ."

He was asked the following question: "What changes in revolutionary theory did Che's guerrilla introduce, viewed in critical perspective?"

Ciro Bustos replied:

"Che's guerrilla," if you are referring to his action in Bolivia, was the result of his entire trajectory as a guerrilla leader from the Sierra Maestra up to his death. Fidel Castro and the group that brought Che into the Cuban feat, resorted to a method of struggle that has always been used in Latin America, including in the wars for independence and later by Zapata and Villa in Mexico and by Sandino in Nicaragua.⁴²

The change was—as a method of struggle—to carry guerrilla warfare from the level of tactics to strategy [llevar la guerrilla del plano táctico al estratégico], and in the political arena [lo político] to establish and demonstrate, in Cuba, that the revolution is not made along the road of sterile ideological "chitchat," but along the road of armed struggle and that for a fundamentally peasant Latin America, the principal form of struggle is guerrilla warfare. Che, with his permanent elaboration of theory and with his practical example lifted this schema to a high level, where the alternative is no longer national but implies the necessity—

inescapably—of confronting and destroying imperialism by means of armed struggle, generated and developed throughout the subcontinent as the only possibility of achieving the genuine liberation of our peoples.

The conclusion reached by *Ciro Bustos* that the peoples of Latin America will achieve their emancipation from imperialism only by taking arms in hand is dead right. No revolutionist will dispute it.

His theory of how this goal is to be reached is simplicity itself. You take guerrilla warfare as it has always been practiced in Latin America and lift it from a tactic to a strategy. This eliminates the need for any sterile ideological chitchat about Leninism, Trotskyism, or the role of a revolutionary socialist party, or the problem of connecting up with the masses.

If you grant the basic premise of this disciple of *Che Guevara* that it is feasible to convert guerrilla warfare from a tactic to a strategy, it appears to me that the rest of the position taken by *Ciro Bustos* is quite consistent. In fact, as if in a laboratory experiment—since he was not present at the last world congress and in all likelihood has not yet heard that such a thing occurred—he enables us to see in two paragraphs where the basic position of the majority on this question ends up logically.

How the Issue Was Posed at the Last World Congress

In light of the foregoing, let me remind the leading comrades of the majority of the way the minority at the last world congress insisted upon the importance of regarding guerrilla warfare as a tactic and not a strategy.

It will be recalled that in the preparatory discussion, I submitted a document "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America."⁴³ At the end of the document, I stressed three points "in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding." Two of these involved international actions, such as campaigns around single situations or single issues, and mobilizing aid for a national section under heavy repression. As was to be expected, these were acceptable to everyone.

The third point concerned orientation in relation to guerrilla war. At the time I could see no reason why the author or authors of the draft resolution on Latin America would not accept this, too. To my surprise, they rejected it. Here is the point:

3. A section of the Fourth International may find that at a certain stage of the revolutionary process in its country, it is necessary and productive to engage in guerrilla war, as a specific form of armed struggle. The proviso is that it be conceived as a tactic entailed by political considerations, not as a new-found formula guaranteeing quick or certain success, and that it be within the means available to the section. This holds, it should be added, not only for Latin America but for similar areas elsewhere.

Finally, in view of the differences that have emerged over the relative place of guerrilla war as a tactic, it would be well to examine the question more specifically in relation to the Transitional Program. Our movement has already recognized that in certain countries, under certain circumstances, guerrilla war can play a positive role. However, it has not analyzed the negative consequences of guerrilla war if it is attempted in countries, or under circumstances, where it is out of place. Experience would now seem to testify rather heavily for the conclusion that while the appearance of guerrillas can signify a sharp rise in the class struggle, it can also mark a phase of decline, in which case it must be judged as a sign of despair and desperation, one of the symptoms of defeat.

As a consciously applied tactic, guerrilla war would seem to come under the sections of the Transitional Program dealing with the arming of the proletariat and the linkup between the proletariat and the peasantry.

A critical study of the varied experience with guerrilla war in a whole series of countries would be extremely useful to put this tactic in better perspective, to relate it properly to political strategy, and to counteract the rather widespread tendency to elevate it into a universal formula and even a panacea.

The rejection of this point was decisive in dividing the delegates at the last world congress into a majority and a minority. Perhaps some of the comrades of the majority did not understand what was involved. The quotations from *Ciro Bustos*, from the *Tupamaros*, and from *Ladislav Dowbor* will, I hope, make things clearer.

Taken in the light of Comrade Maitan's orientation toward guerrilla warfare, the quotations should also assist in providing a better understanding of the forces exerting pressure on our movement. In face of this pressure and the rejection of the position of regarding guerrilla warfare as a tactic, perhaps it will be understood why we feel some skepticism with regard to Comrade Maitan's assurances that on party building he has not changed at all—he still holds it to be the ABC of Leninism and a *sine qua non*.

From a leader who rejects the Leninist concept of guerrilla

warfare as an "auxiliary" form of struggle, such assurances are not convincing. I am reminded of the famous line from Bob Dylan: "You don't have to be a weatherman to know which way the wind blows."

More Than Latin America Involved

In the discussion at the last world congress, the comrades of the majority insisted with some vehemence that the orientation toward guerrilla warfare involved Latin America and nowhere else.

The minority contended that this was an arbitrary and artificial approach that failed to take into account a series of different sets of interrelationships. Here is what I wrote in "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America":

Another point to consider is whether the central concept in the draft resolution on Latin America, namely, giving a "geographical-military" orientation priority over political strategy, can be logically confined to just one continent.

The Cubans have hardly viewed it that way, and certainly the tendencies immediately under their influence do not view it that way. They incline rather strongly to view it as an internationally valid orientation, except—perhaps—in the imperialist sector, about which they have little to say; and the sector of the degenerated or deformed workers' states about which they have nothing at all to say so far as the struggle for a political revolution is concerned. It would be very difficult to find convincing arguments to persuade these currents that in the colonial world as a whole the tactic of preparation of an engagement in rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period is valid only for Latin America.

In fact logic speaks for an opposite conclusion. If the draft resolution on Latin America were to be passed in its present form by the coming world congress, our movement would be hard put to explain why the orientation decided on as good for Latin America was considered to be bad for the rest of the colonial and semicolonial world. It would certainly be contended that such a position is inconsistent and that such a sharp geographical demarcation cannot reasonably be made.

This view has been confirmed so strikingly that one wonders what prevents Comrade Maitan and those who agree with him from writing about it and drawing the appropriate conclusions. I will leave aside the situation in the Middle East, and even Québec, to take up a development that is absolutely decisive in showing that the orientation cannot be confined to Latin America, or even the colonial world generally, inasmuch as it has

taken place in the central stronghold of the international capitalist system.

The two editors of *Scanlan's*, a monthly exposé publication in the United States, devoted their entire January 1971 issue of ninety-six full-sized pages to the single theme, emblazoned in colors on the cover: "Suppressed Issue: Guerrilla War in the USA." (The words "suppressed issue" refer to the fact that three printers in the U.S. refused to handle the issue. The editors moved to Canada to publish their magazine, shipping it across the border to subscribers and newsstands.)

The main feature is a section entitled "Guerrilla Acts of Sabotage and Terrorism in the United States 1965-1970." This is a day-by-day listing, running from February 12, 1965, to September 7, 1970, of every "definable instance of left-wing terrorism and sabotage in America since such acts began in 1965" that *Scanlan's* reporters and researchers could find in the press or in official reports. The grand total, according to their adding machine, amounts to 1,391 cases. (I will leave aside the validity of the list, which is rather dubious.)

In the opinion of the editors, what is occurring—although the government refuses to admit it—is "urban guerrilla war in the most advanced industrial nation in the world."

Editor Warren Hinckle is of the view that "if the bombings continue this fall [1970] at the current hurricane pace, it is only going to take someone to say it is so and guerrilla warfare will become a catchword of the 1970's along with women's liberation and the mini skirt."

The authors believe that the Nixon administration is completely unable to stop it:

The FBI, the Secret Service, the Treasury Department, the Pentagon, the CIA and even the Bureau of Mines are all in on the chase. With all the resources at their disposal to monitor and supervise reputed revolutionaries, it must be a matter of considerable professional and political embarrassment that the combined law enforcement, military, security and spy establishment of the United States has been unable to catch even a literal handful of the thousands of underground revolutionaries who, now as a matter of daily benediction, harass the government with sniper fire or bombs.

Why are they so hard to catch? Because of the effectiveness of their organizational technique. They are divided into tiny cells, consisting of as few as three persons.

What is the social origin of most of these guerrilla fighters?

There are two broad groupings: one consists of members of the Black and other nonwhite communities; the other "is the white and middle-to-upper-class citizens of college or dropout age. . . ."

Are these engagers in sabotage and terrorism to be associated with any particular organization?

"The highest profile among the practitioners of this art of the explosionist raspberry," replies Editor Hinckle, "are the Weatherman,⁴⁴ who make it a point of principle each time they blow up something to drive the FBI quite crazy by popping up somewhere in the country and telling how they got away with it. It is all a little in the manner of a terrorist's April Fool, but the joke appears always to be on the FBI."

Where did this "new wave of urban guerrillas" get the idea?

"Our object was to document planned guerrilla actions that clearly employed the technique of urban guerrilla warfare as practiced in Latin America." The Tupamaros are mentioned various times. Hinckle refers to the tactics "successfully employed by insurgent forces in Ireland, China, Israel, Algeria, Cuba and currently in Latin American and African nations. . . ."

These tactics "are being experimentally adapted to American surroundings by black urban guerrillas and the burgeoning middle and upper-middle class white revolutionaries who operate with relative impunity from college oriented communities which have become cultural and political 'enclaves' in America."

And who are the theoreticians studied by the new wave of urban guerrillas?

"The revolutionary ideology that Mao defined in his treatises on guerrilla war is regarded in most instances as absolute, major exceptions being his political structure and the encrusted bureaucracy of vertical communism."

Another authority is Régis Debray.

The primary theoretician of the "new guerrilla" is Régis Debray, a young French philosopher-journalist and close friend of Fidel Castro. . . .

Accepting Mao's concept of the guerrillas being one with the people as the *sine qua non* of a successful guerrilla movement, Debray rejected Mao's principle that "politics directs the gun." Rather, it is the gun, in the form of successful guerrilla actions against definable manifestations of imperialism and oppression of the people, which defines and develops successful revolutionary politics.

This shattering revision of traditional Marxism offs the Communist Party from its traditional and cherished role as the political vanguard

which sets the correct "line" for the people. The guerrillas, through terrorist and military actions geared to gain propaganda successes, gradually politicize and assemble the exploited classes on their side. Communist bureaucrats are left out in the cold.

What drives most professional observers of the new American revolutionaries to such fits of distraction and disgust is their lack of discernible "goals" of "something to replace what they want to tear down," their emphasis on the primacy of revolutionary tactics over political structure. Yet this reality, so defiant of traditional politics, is the carefully thought out ideological cornerstone of contemporary guerrilla theory as it is being practiced in Latin America and experimented with under the unique conditions that the United States has to offer any pioneers. The traditional left, and particularly the older left—from social democrats on the right to leftover descendants of the Luddites on the left—takes about as much joy in guerrilla politics as Spiro Agnew.

Still another source of the guerrilla gospel is Carlos Marighella. "Marighella's *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* . . . is prized as a crime-doer's textbook by American guerrillas."

The editors indicate their appreciation of the applicability of Marighella's prescriptions to the "unique conditions" of the United States by including selections from the *Minimanual*.

Finally, what is the program of the new wave of urban guerrilla fighters in the United States?

"All American guerrilla groups," Editor Hinckle informs us, have revolutionary tactics in common, but few share any common ideology. Few, indeed, have a definable ideology or post-revolutionary program. Most are feeling their way along the bombing trail, letting the tactics, as it were, quarterback the action in the manner suggested by Regis Debray. . . .

If the guerrillas can be said to uniformly agree on any goals of American guerrilla warfare in addition to fighting the hated war in Southeast Asia, it would be to support national liberation movements throughout the world and, of course, the black liberation struggle in the United States.

The issue contains some interviews with members of the "new wave" that offer us a rare view of their psychological makeup, including—according to the editors—their almost universal use of drugs, ranging from the mildest to the hardest, but for lack of space I will leave these aside.

It would be a mistake to think that this reportage can be dismissed as a piece of propaganda designed to advance the Weatherman group that cannot possibly have much impact in the

current situation in the United States. Like all political bids in the radical movement, it requires analysis and an answer by the Trotskyist movement. Its importance can be judged from the fact that the Central Headquarters of the Black Panther Party,⁴⁵ upon receiving an advance copy of the January issue of *Scanlan's*, gave it official approval and began serializing it in the weekly *Black Panther*.

The entire front page of the December 19, 1970, issue of *Black Panther* was used to duplicate the headline "Guerrilla War in the U.S.A." A map of the United States from *Scanlan's*, showing in clusters, graduated as to size, where acts of "armed propaganda" have occurred in the past five years was likewise featured on the front page of *Black Panther* as well as an editorial, repeating word for word some of the paragraphs written by Warren Hinckle.

Through *Black Panther*, if not through other channels, the issue of urban guerrilla war in the United States has been raised in the vanguard on an international scale. It can be sidestepped only at heavy political cost. What answer should we give?

It is true that a great rise has occurred in the United States in acts of individual violence, not to mention ghetto explosions, or neighborhood flare-ups. The causes lie in the deteriorating economic and social situation and the effort of the capitalist state to repress the resulting dissatisfaction. The escalation of violence is one of the signs of this dialectical interplay.

To recognize this and to seek to turn the radicalization of the Afro-Americans and other oppressed nationalities, the women, and the campus toward constructing the only instrument that can offer a genuine solution—a mass revolutionary socialist party—is one thing. To place the label of "urban guerrilla war" on the radicalization and to seek to divert it into the dead end of terrorism and sabotage conducted by tiny groups, lacking any consistent revolutionary ideology at all and in isolation from the working class, is something else again. A question of basic principles is involved.

To meet this challenge—which the Socialist Workers Party can be counted on to do—requires, among other things, an effective polemic against the sources from which the "new wave of urban guerrillas" draws theoretical nourishment. This includes not only Debray but Mao, Marighella, the Tupamaros, the Weatherman experimentalists, and, in general, any ideologist who considers the Leninist strategy of party building to have been superseded by guerrilla action, whether rural or urban.

The Shift in Comrade Maitan's Views

In my article "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America," I asserted:

"The course prescribed by Comrade Maitan and made official in the Latin American resolution represents a concession to ultraleftism. This is how it must be characterized objectively."⁴⁶

As to how a resolution of this kind could gain a majority, I offer an explanation along the following lines:

First, that some of the radicalizing youth which our movement had recently begun recruiting in various areas were not yet free of ultraleftism. This was to be expected, owing to their lack of political experience. These youth especially admired the Latin American guerrilla fighters, above all Che Guevara, which of course was not to their discredit—quite the contrary—but which did present a problem to be overcome in their further development.

Second, a sector of the Trotskyist movement in Latin America had become convinced that we faced an impasse unless we turned to guerrilla action. What was required, as these comrades saw it, was more than a tactical approach to engaging in guerrilla warfare. "They wanted total commitment of the movement as a whole, the elevation of engagement on the guerrilla road into a principle."⁴⁷

It was the combination of these two views among many of the delegates at the last world congress, I said, that provided Comrade Maitan with his majority.

Comrade Maitan's insistence on the need and the possibility of a quick breakthrough provided a platform on which these two sectors could unite. The perspective of gaining leadership of a mass movement, or even winning power in a selected country in short order, was very attractive to some of the impatient youth, and, of course, dovetailed with the thinking of those who visualized guerrilla warfare as having extraordinary powers not available to other means.

The role played by Comrade Maitan was thus of key importance in cementing together the combination.

On Comrade Maitan's own evolution—which also played a role, naturally—I said among other things: "It was precisely following this exhilarating expansion of forces [the dramatic growth in the May-June 1968 period—J.H.] that some of the leaders of the Fourth International, above all Comrade Maitan, began adapting to ultraleftism."⁴⁸

In his current article "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America—Defense of an Orientation and a Method," Comrade Maitan—speaking for himself, if not the others—protests that even if the formulation "began adapting to ultraleftism" were apt, "unfortunately the chronology is wrong." To prove his point, he states: "From Comrade Hansen's first article itself it can be deduced that I had defined my orientation before May 1968 and thus before the Trotskyist breakthrough in France was concretized in the building of the Ligue."⁴⁹

I am quite willing to stand corrected on the date of Comrade Maitan's conversion to the guerrilla orientation, all the more so inasmuch as, despite his remark about my insinuating he "cleverly manipulated" the delegates, he does not challenge my analysis of the composition of the majority. Just the same it is regrettable that he himself is not more specific about his own evolution on this question.

The best I can do, going by the available record, is to put it somewhere between two dates.

The first date is 1965. In that year, Comrade Maitan wrote an article, "Some Criticisms and Comments Concerning the Document on the African Revolution," in which he posed "the hypothesis of formation, for example, of a workers state in Egypt in a relatively cold way, without the active revolutionary intervention of the masses at the crucial moment of the qualitative leap." (In English in *International Information Bulletin*, December 1965. See also my reply in the same issue of the *IIB*, "Nasser's Egypt—On the Way to a Workers State?")

According to this view, if I am not mistaken, a regime like the one headed by Nasser could create a workers' state in a "cold way"; that is, without a revolution, without the mobilization of the masses, and, one supposes, without guerrilla warfare, either rural or urban, or any other form of armed struggle whether viewed as a tactic or a strategy.

The second date is May 15, 1968, the date of the letter sent by Comrade Maitan to the United Secretariat, which he submitted under the title "An Insufficient Document" to the international pre-congress discussion. The stand taken in this letter appears to me to be in polar opposition to the stand taken in the 1965 article. Let me recall the two key paragraphs:

But it is only by successes or revolutionary struggles at the head of a mass movement in one or several countries that we will be able to surmount our difficulties and present contradictions. What is expected

from us from now on is that we demonstrate in practice the historical value of our movement and we will be judged essentially on this basis. This can appear, at bottom, to be an elementary truth, but it is a question of inspiring our whole activity with this recognition. It is a question more precisely of determining in what countries we have the best chance of a breakthrough and subordinating everything to the elementary necessity for a success in these countries, and even, if necessary, in a single country. The rest will come later.

There are, in fact, several countries where we at present have possibilities for an important breakthrough (youth movement in France, antiwar movement and youth movement in the United States, South Africa with a certain time) and we must unquestionably make an effort in the direction of India, but we must place everything above all on a sector of Latin America and you know very well which one. We must exploit the preparatory period of the congress to convince the entire movement to operate in practice, every day, with this perspective. Permit me to express myself a little paradoxically: it is necessary to understand and to explain that at the present stage the International will be built around Bolivia.⁵⁰

In place of a "relatively cold way"—in which the Fourth International is excluded from playing an active role—the perspective has veered to concentrating everything on a "breakthrough" whereby a small group of Fourth Internationalists, by picking up the gun, can place themselves at the head of the masses and win power in short order, even if they have to keep repeating the attempt for a decade or more.

My attempt at bracketing the date of Comrade Maitan's conversion may be incorrect. Perhaps it occurred much earlier and he sees no contradiction between his current advocacy of a guerrilla orientation and his earlier view that a workers' state can be formed in a relatively cold way, "without the active revolutionary intervention of the masses at the crucial moment of the qualitative leap."

It may be that it all depends on which country you have in mind. In some, the hot way is required. In others the relatively cold way is sufficient.

Even at the cost of my having to make another self-criticism, I hope more material will be provided by Comrade Maitan on this question.

One of the items in the evolution of Comrade Maitan's thinking might have been the internal developments in the Italian section of the Fourth International at that time, when, if I am informed correctly, the bulk of the youth were lost to a Maoist current. But the notorious paucity of records concerning the internal life of the

Italian section precludes me from forming a judgment. Perhaps Comrade Maitan can offer us some information on this not unimportant aspect of the question.

Orientation in Other Sectors

Comrade Maitan is vexed at my conclusion that the course prescribed by him and made official in the Latin American resolution represents a concession to ultraleftism. I stated further—and I see no reason to change this opinion:

Consistent application of the course charted by Comrade Maitan would prove disastrous for the Fourth International. The line could hardly be confined to Latin America or even the colonial world generally, for the same ultraleft tendencies to which the adaptation has been made are operative in the imperialist centers. Fostering an ultraleft course in Latin America would surely be paralleled by permissiveness toward ultraleftism, if not worse, in the imperialist centers. In fact, there is evidence that this has already been occurring in the quite different context of conditions in Britain.⁵¹

Comrade Maitan brushes this aside with the comment that “while not denying that connections exist between the orientations proposed for Latin America and possible orientations in other sectors, we think that no progress can be made in our discussion by mixing in problems which, if they need be discussed at all, should be taken up in a different context.”⁵²

Unfortunately, it is not possible, as we have seen, to cut things up so neatly and so disposably. I should like to insist on the importance of the interrelationship between the guerrilla orientation for Latin America adopted at the last world congress and the orientation followed by certain other sectors of the world Trotskyist movement.

Blackburn on Urban Guerrilla War

The London *Times* of January 12, 1971, published an article entitled “The stagnant revolution.” A subtitle was still more eye-catching: “Robin Blackburn looks at the New Left in disarray.”⁵³

The article was not about the New Left in Britain but—the United States. Blackburn, of course, told it like it is:

So far, nothing has emerged to fill the gap left by the collapse of Students for a Democratic Society which split into warring factions last year and in the process completely lost its strength among the mass of

students. Today the various revolutionary splinter groups are no larger than their counterparts in Britain and certainly smaller than those in France, Germany, Italy or Japan. Yet they command more attention than their numbers alone would seem to warrant since, in a situation already charged with social tension, they are readier to move from the word to the deed.

No, Blackburn is not referring to the Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance or to any of the groups that have jointly inspired and mounted the mass mobilizations against the war in Vietnam that caused one president to drop out of active politics and that have led Nixon to say that he may end up as only a "one-term" president.⁵⁴ Blackburn has other forces in mind:

The F.B.I. claims that there were more than 3,000 "bombings" last year, causing many millions of dollars of damage, though as yet little loss of life. Most of these actions are the work of small collectives, comprising a dozen or, at most, two dozen members. The only white revolutionary organization committed to such tactics is the Weathermen, formerly a faction within the S.D.S.: its membership is entirely underground and cannot number more than a few hundred.

The urge to "pick up the gun" in part reflects the sense of impotence of the mass radical movement, which has proved unable to stop the war in Indo-China, let alone pose a revolutionary challenge to American capitalism. Only a tiny minority has drawn the conclusion that outright civil war is the only option left.

Blackburn mentions specific cases of bombings ascribable to those who have presumably opted for outright civil war. He includes in his survey the following: "At the end of last year Hoover of the F.B.I. announced that he had discovered a collective, comprised almost entirely of priests and nuns, with a plan to kidnap a White House official to be exchanged for a bombing halt in Indo-China."

(Blackburn is referring to the Daniel and Philip Berrigan frame-up case. He fails to mention that the two pacifist priests, speaking from their prison cells in Danbury, Connecticut, where they were alleged to have masterminded the plot, branded the charges as fabrications.)⁵⁵

I will cite two more paragraphs to show beyond question the ideology represented by Robin Blackburn:

Just when repression or frustration seem to have destroyed the revolutionary movement, it is sustained by the eruption of revolt in some

new context. Another source of its power of survival is the new youth culture which has merged with revolutionary politics in a variety of bizarre forms. The old left formed tightly integrated political parties which provided for every aspect of its members. . . .

The Weatherman consciously tries to extend the links between the cultural and political underground, which is why it sprung Timothy Leary from jail,⁵⁶ winning him over to its political line in the process. The Weatherman claims that the prevalence of the youth culture renders revolutionaries much less visible to the agents of repression. It has now been underground for over six months and none of them has been captured in spite of the fact that all their leaders are on the F.B.I.'s most-wanted list.

Bernardine Dohrn's Letter

The true situation is quite different from Blackburn's account. Both the Black Panthers and the Weatherpeople were already deeply divided when Robin Blackburn wrote his article. The factional struggle in the Black Panther Party soon flared into a public scandal with each side "expelling" the other on charges that included the foulest personal recriminations.⁵⁷ This internal war can appear bizarre and even incomprehensible unless you know the central political issue—the "strategy" of armed struggle in the U.S., that is, the very developments Blackburn found so exhilarating in the American scene.

Robin Blackburn is silent about it, but surely he must have been aware of the December 6, 1970, "New Morning" statement released by the "Weather Underground" over the signature of Bernardine Dohrn, one of the leaders involved in the Manhattan townhouse explosion in which three Weatherpeople lost their lives.⁵⁸ The letter is of great interest, for it expresses the views of a sector that is moving away from the "strategy" of guerrilla warfare after having tasted its fruits. Here are some of the points made by Dohrn:

It has been nine months since the townhouse explosion. In that time, the future of our revolution has been changed decisively. A growing illegal organization of young women and men can live and fight and love inside Babylon. The FBI can't catch us; we've pierced their bullet-proof shield. But the townhouse forever destroyed our belief that armed struggle is the only real revolutionary struggle.

It is time for the movement to go out into the air, to organize, to risk calling rallies and demonstrations, to convince that mass actions against the war and in support of rebellions do make a difference. . . .

The deaths of three friends ended our military conception of what we are doing. It took us weeks of careful talking to rediscover our roots, to remember that we had been turned-on to the possibilities of revolution by denying the schools, the jobs, the death relationships we were "educated" for.⁵⁹

Weatherwoman Dohrn tells how the group opened up its bombing activities with inner qualms. "Many people in the collective did not want to be involved in the large scale, almost random bombing offensive that was planned. But they struggled day and night and eventually, everyone agreed to do their part."

"At the end," she continues, "they believed and acted as if only those who die are proved revolutionaries." They went into action without really considering what came next.

This tendency to consider only bombings or picking up the gun as revolutionary, with the glorification of the heavier the better, we've called the military error. After the explosion, we called off all armed actions until such time as we felt the causes had been understood and acted upon. We found that the alternative direction already existed among us and had been developed within other collectives. We became aware that a group of outlaws who are isolated from the youth communities do not have a sense of what is going on, cannot develop strategies that grow to include large numbers of people. . . .

We are so used to feeling powerless that we believe the pig propaganda about the death of the movement, or some bad politics about rallies being obsolete and bullshit. . . .

The demonstrations and strikes following the rape of Indochina and the murders at Jackson and Kent last May showed real power and made a strong difference.⁶⁰ New people were reached and involved and the government was put on the defensive.⁶¹

Bernardine Dohrn's letter made an impact among the protagonists of urban guerrilla war in the United States and Canada. Among the Black Panthers it served to detonate the growing internal frictions.

Nine of the Black Panthers on trial in New York wrote an open letter in reply to Bernardine Dohrn.⁶² The letter, published in the January 19, 1971, issue of the *East Village Other*, cited Che Guevara and Carlos Marighella with approval, and denounced the strategy of party building in the strongest terms.

The publication of this letter by Eldridge Cleaver's faction was answered by Huey Newton's faction with immediate expulsions, and Eldridge Cleaver responded in kind. The Black Panther

Party was split wide open. After that, the key issue became obscured by personal insults, charges of murder, and threats of assassination.

One final item, and the true situation—so cavalierly ignored by Robin Blackburn—will be outlined sufficiently well for our discussion.

According to Blackburn, Timothy Leary was won over to the Weatherman line. In January, Leary was placed under house arrest in Algiers by Eldridge Cleaver. The key difference again was over armed struggle.

Leary, having become convinced he should be a revolutionary, was faithfully studying the works of Kim Il Sung. But he had not really changed his basic views. He had simply added armed struggle as a finishing touch. In his opinion, up to now revolutions have simply meant the substitution of one set of "armed dictators" for another. "I think that if my philosophy is understood, we might find a way out of this boring, repetitious cycle of one armed group overthrowing another and becoming just as bad." Here is how it can be done:

In order to break this cycle, I firmly believe that you must liberate people's nervous systems. Free their nervous systems and the rest follows. [Isn't it remarkable how the rest follows?—J.H.] That is my philosophy and I can summarize it in a few sentences. Internal Liberation must precede external. And you must move from neurological liberation to the religious, to the sexual, to the cultural, to the economic, to the political, to the armed—instead of the other way.⁶³

Eldridge Cleaver believes in the reverse order, or at least beginning with armed struggle. Hence the need to keep the good patron saint of hallucinogens under close surveillance in his quarters in Algiers.

The obligation to bring the British public up to date on the seamier side of urban guerrilla war in the United States concerns the *London Times* and the guest writer whom they billed as "an editor of the *New Left Review* in Britain."

Of primary interest to us is something more immediate—the *Red Mole* bills this British Weatherman and conscious anti-Leninist as a member of its editorial board. This fact helps explain the otherwise puzzling hybrid character of the *Red Mole*.⁶⁴

Entryism and the Ultrared Mole

During the period when a sector of the world Trotskyist movement was practicing "entryism sui generis," one of the ploys was to start up a paper that adopted the guise of being "left centrist."⁶⁵ The idea was that when a sector of the organized working class ultimately began moving in a revolutionary direction it would, in its first stage, be left centrist. To be in position to head such a current, some of the Trotskyists who engaged in entryism sui generis thought they had to appear as left centrists—even though they were really revolutionists.

A supporting circle around the "left centrist" paper made a convenient halfway house for a group of Trotskyists doing entry work and another group assigned to maintaining an "independent" group and sometimes an "independent" newspaper or magazine, often distinguished for its irregularity.

The entire tactic was dangerous, particularly if stretched out. The Stalinist or Social Democratic milieu in which the entry work was carried out was conducive to disintegration of revolutionary morale. The "independent" work tended to become downgraded in importance. Recruiting to Trotskyism, particularly the integration of new cadres, presented special difficulties that inclined the Trotskyist militants to take anything but an aggressive attitude in this field. Out of fear of not conforming to specifications, the "left centrist" paper tended to be politically sluggish and unattractive (genuinely left-centrist papers were often much more audacious in taking a stance further to the left, particularly in occasionally opening their columns to Trotskyist material labeled as such). Worst of all, among some members carrying out this tactic, the left-centrist mask, worn so long, finally tended to become the person—the one-time Trotskyist changed into a hardened left-centrist.

The *Red Mole* is remindful of a sui generis "left centrist" Trotskyist paper—but viewed in a mirror in which the former sign "keep right" reads, as it should in a reflection, "keep left."

The new schema would seem to run as follows: The milieu in which we work is the radicalizing students. In their first stage, they pass through ultraleftism. You have to be there to meet them and attract them. The best tactic in speaking with them is to adopt an ultraleft stance. Just as the old sui generis paper tried to include genuine left centrists on its editorial board, so the *Red Mole* tries to include genuine representatives of the "new wave of

urban guerrillas," or facsimiles thereof, like British Weatherman Robin Blackburn.

It should be observed that in both instances—both the old *sui generis* paper and the *Red Mole*—the premises are sound enough. Revolutionists have to remain in contact with the masses, either a sector in movement or one likely to move. Currently, the Trotskyists have to remain in contact with the radicalizing youth, recruiting to the maximum from them.

What is disputable in both instances is the symmetrical tactical course, which in neither case follows from the premises. To remain in contact with sources of recruitment, and to carry out actual recruitment successfully, does *not* require adaptation to the mistakes, prejudices, or low level of political experience and understanding encountered among those we are seeking to win over. Their training as Trotskyists must begin in the very process of recruiting them.

To *adapt* to the milieu entails three immediate dangers: (1) confusion as to where Trotskyism stands on issues of considerable substance; (2) loss of one's own militants to the milieu; (3) waste of time and missing of opportunities.

The current permissive attitude toward ultraleftism involves basically similar dangers. Moreover a new logic can be set in motion. Just as entryism fostered the belief among some of those who practiced it that left centrism *is* Trotskyism, so permissiveness toward ultraleftism can become converted into the conviction that *ultraleftism* is Trotskyism.

The outcome can thus be most deleterious to the main task facing our movement as a whole—construction of a Leninist-type party.

"Let It Bleed"

The confusion created by the *Red Mole's* adaptation to ultraleftism carried a political overhead. A good example was the scandal resulting from the display given to the article on the Labour Party by Editorial Board Member Robin Blackburn in the April 15, 1970, issue and the failure to answer it properly.

In "Let It Bleed," Blackburn argued that the Labour Party was a "capitalist party," not essentially different from the Tory party, that its hold over the British working class had been "weakened," and therefore in the upcoming general election it should be actively fought by revolutionists.

Blackburn proposed a course of action:

The central argument of this article is that after the recent extended experience of Labour Government it would be absolutely incorrect for us to offer any kind of support to Harold Wilson or the Party he leads.⁶⁶ I will assume that no Marxist can believe in passively abstaining from politics, especially during an election period when the political consciousness of the masses is stimulated. I will therefore conclude that the only principled course for revolutionary socialists during the coming election will be an active campaign to discredit both of Britain's large capitalist parties. In this campaign we should certainly pull none of our punches. We should disrupt the campaigns of the bourgeois parties and their leading spokesmen using all the imaginative and direct methods which the last few years have taught us.

It is true that the editors printed a brief note stating that with Blackburn's article the *Red Mole* "opens a long-needed discussion on the Labour Party—a problem which has bedevilled the revolutionary movement since its existence. Our pages will be open to all comrades wishing to discuss the question."

However, no article of equivalent length, stating the position of the British Trotskyists, was carried in the same issue. No opposing view at all was printed in that issue. In fact, from the editorial note itself there was no way of knowing that Blackburn did not represent the view of the editorial board on this question. For all anyone might know, reading that issue of the *Red Mole*, Blackburn's analysis and conclusions might be those of the British Trotskyists.

This created a considerable problem. In other English-speaking countries in particular, the Trotskyists were suddenly confronted with the political necessity of publicly disavowing the ultraleft line carried by the *Red Mole* on this question.

For Blackburn, of course, it was quite a coup, a good example of what a partisan of urban guerrilla warfare can accomplish with an adroit and well-timed thrust.

Two issues later, May 14, 1970, the *Red Mole* published the first contribution in the discussion "open to all comrades wishing to discuss the question."

This was a letter from Pat Jordan, Secretary, International Marxist Group.⁶⁷ After praising Blackburn on some things, Comrade Jordan ventured to say, "I think him wrong in some of his assumptions."

Then he came to the main point of his letter: "As soon as time permits I will be putting down my thoughts in full."

"In the meantime," he continued, "a few points:"

The strongest of these was that he thought Blackburn was "wrong in comparing the Labour Party with the U.S. Democratic Party."

For himself, Comrade Jordan took a pessimistic view of the pragmatic possibilities: "If all the revolutionary Marxists in the whole country went all out to persuade people to vote Labour, it is doubtful whether this would win the L.P. one seat."

However, it was necessary to indicate preferences. He would prefer Labour to win because that "would help to destroy social democracy."

As to what the revolutionary movement ought to do, Comrade Jordan proposed: "The most fruitful thing revolutionaries can do in the coming General Election campaign is to use the heightened political interest (especially amongst the young people) to spread revolutionary ideas and expose the bourgeois politicians of all parties."

To undo the damage caused by Blackburn's article, this letter was much too little and much too late.

The June 1-15, 1970, issue of the *Red Mole* carried the promised article by Comrade Jordan. He had little difficulty disposing of Blackburn's analysis of the nature of the Labour Party; but it must be said that when he reached the point where it became necessary to project a course of action, he came down with a sudden case of stomach pains:

For reasons given above, I am in favour of the victory of Labour in the coming election campaign. However, it would be the height of foolishness to draw from this the conclusion that revolutionaries' main activity should be that of calling upon people to vote Labour. In the first place, it is totally unrealistic to think that small revolutionary groups can influence the outcome of the election. Secondly, to make our main thrust the slogan "Vote Labour" would be to put ourselves on the left-wing of those forces mystifying the whole electoral process. This would, in effect, be adding our weight to those processes which enable the Labour Party to divert working class aspirations. It would also hinder our endeavors to spread revolutionary ideas and our efforts to warn the working class that its main concern should be to prepare for an attack from whatever government emerges.

To concentrate upon the slogan "Keep the Tories Out" would be merely another way of saying "Vote Labour", under present circumstances.

However, it is imperative from a Marxist point of view, to explain very clearly to the politically aware why it would be best for Labour to win. This is an educational process, not an election-deciding exercise.

Is it too much to say that this position is ambiguous? The IMG rejects the course of running a candidate of its own. It has no independent alternative, not even a candidate for a minor post. Nevertheless the IMG refuses to back the slogan "Vote Labour." Thus the IMG opens itself to the charge of following an abstentionist policy.

Times can arise when it would be correct to call for a boycott of bourgeois elections—an *active* boycott. However, as we know from Lenin, this implies a revolutionary upsurge in which the working class is prepared to drive for power, arms in hand. That was hardly the situation in Britain in 1970. Electoral illusions still persist among the majority of the British workers, however few are to be found in the head of Robin Blackburn.

Seeking a "vector" that would enable him to avoid the charge of abstentionism, Comrade Jordan said: "I am in favour of the victory of Labour. . . ."

And what does a worker do in the voting booth? Nothing more than take off his cap and salute like a red mole?

The way Comrade Jordan muddled through in his article does not end the story. On another page of the very same issue of the *Red Mole* a contrasting line came out with admirable clarity.

In a cartoon strip, two political demagogues stand, each on his soap box, the one labeled "Vote Conservative Now," the other "Vote Labour!" (Underneath, the cartoonist has written, "They're all the same!") A red mole holds up his sign, "Workers and students struggle against capitalism!"

A second panel shows a crowd of moles ganging up on the two speakers, physically beating both of them, trampling them underfoot, tearing up the placard marked "Vote Labour," and joining a long line of moles triumphantly carrying the red flag. That's a bully way of dispelling the electoral illusions of the British workers and showing them what we think of free speech!

As to the relative impact of the article written by the secretary of the IMG and the accompanying cartoon there is no question as to which made the greater impression on the readers of the *Red Mole*. "Imaginative and direct methods" pay off! Especially when used by an editor to tip off the readers as to the paper's real line.

Within the IMG, a minority tendency voiced some telling criticisms of the orientation of the majority. I will not go into the internal differences in the IMG at this time, but refer comrades to the extensive compilation of both the minority and majority documents entitled "Key Documents Discussed by the IMG

Membership in Preparation for Their March 1970 Conference.”⁶⁸

Of special interest in connection with the immediate point is the article dated May 17, 1970, by Connie Harris, “The Labour Party in Perspective—In Reply to Robin Blackburn.”⁶⁹ This was submitted to the *Red Mole* for publication in accordance with the public announcement that “Our pages will be open to all comrades wishing to discuss the question.”

Despite the promise, the article by Connie Harris was *rejected*.

On Guerrilla Action in Québec

How unrealistic it is for Comrade Maitan to seek to confine the discussion to Latin America was shown in a most convincing way by the attempts of two different small groups, each calling itself “FLQ,” to imitate in Montréal what some of the guerrilla groups have been doing in Uruguay, Brazil, and elsewhere.⁷⁰ Not only that. The reaction of the *Red Mole* was something more than enthusiastic. Urban guerrilla warfare “right in the heart of Canada itself!”

The Canadian Trotskyist movement, which was under heavy attack in the general repression—two of its leading members were imprisoned⁷¹—had little choice but to publicly state its differences with the *Red Mole* on this question.

In an article in the December 21, 1970, issue of *Labor Challenge*, Comrade Ross Dowson sought,⁷² first, to rectify the bad reporting of the *Red Mole* concerning the nature, views, and political level of the FLQ. Secondly, he maintained that the support voiced by the *Red Mole* for the *means* used by the two action groups was ultraleft. “The Red Mole article,” Comrade Dowson wrote,

commences with a lengthy quotation by Leon Trotsky where he rejects any concept that individual terror is permissible or impermissible from a “pure morals” point of view and where he expresses his “sympathies” with terrorists in their struggle against national and political oppression.

But this is far from sufficient to explain Trotsky’s, the revolutionary socialist, position on individual terror. To the above it is necessary to add a further statement by Trotsky: “Individual terrorism in our eyes is inadmissible—precisely for the reason that it lowers the masses in their own consciousness, reconciles them to impotence and directs their glances and hopes towards the great avenger and emancipator who will some day come and accomplish this mission. . . .”

“If a pinch of powder and a slug of lead are ample to shoot the enemy through the neck, where is the need of a class organization . . . what need

is there for a party? What is the need of meetings, mass agitation, elections?" asks Trotsky.

Exactly. Insofar as the handful of persons who identify themselves as FLQ have articulated any theory it is a mélange of ideas, all of which reject all of the forms under which the real struggle is now unfolding in Québec. It is the concept of guerrilla actions undertaken by small groups, that are supposed to terrorize the bourgeoisie, render capitalist society inoperative and open the way to a change in power, or to spark the working class, already poised, into massive and decisive action—any and every theory that is substitutist for the class and for the building of mass action.

Needless to say the kidnappings and the murder committed in the name of the FLQ have achieved, as could be foreseen, none of the results desired by their perpetrators. Far from embarrassing the government and bringing it to the brink they have served to strengthen its hand. They have neither inspired nor mobilized the Québécois, other than the forces of conservatism behind [Montréal Mayor Jean] Drapeau in the Montreal civic elections.

While the Canadian Trotskyists were trying to differentiate their own position from the ultraleft one taken by the *Red Mole*, they were confronted by an even worse problem—what to do about the remarks made by Comrade Tariq Ali on a television panel filmed at Oxford by CTV, the national Canadian television network.⁷³ This program was shown throughout Canada, while our comrades, like the rest of the left, were doing their best to mobilize a massive defense against the repression.

Some very provocative questions were directed at Comrade Ali. In answering, he did not appear to keep well in mind the situation in Canada and the need to help to the best of his ability in mobilizing a broad defense against the repression.

For instance, he was asked: "Do you believe, sir, that society today has reached the point where you see you have to use violence to achieve your ends?" Comrade Ali replied:

I would say that this is largely a tactical question, depending precisely on the degree of opposition which we encounter in our struggle for socialism. But briefly, the answer is yes. I think that to achieve the ends we believe in to the establishment of a socialist republic, I believe that a certain element of violence is absolutely necessary.

Another provocative question was: "When you were president of the Oxford Debating Union did you not invite Governor Wallace of Alabama to speak at the Oxford Union?"

Comrade Ali answered: "Yes. Do you know why? Because we would have killed him."

That did not come off so well, and Comrade Ali was soon explaining:

Of course, when I say, "Kill him," I don't mean it necessarily literally. It's a tactical question. If I believed we could get away with killing him we would. It is a question of if you are organized to do so. I don't think we are. I meant kill him politically. That is what we wanted to do, but that wouldn't have taken place because Wallace wouldn't have got further past Oxford station.

The setting for broadcasting this TV program, it should be underlined, was Canada in the midst of a great police hunt for urban guerrillas charged with kidnapping and murder. It was shown on the television screens during a repression in which our own headquarters and the homes of many comrades were raided, and two of our leaders were thrown into prison.

Comrade Ali did what he could to turn the provocative questions into a high-level dialogue on the difference between "individual terror" with mass support and "individual terror" without mass support—a distinction a bit too fine, one must suppose, for the Canadian audience to appreciate at the moment. "At times," he said,

I think that individual terror becomes necessary. I don't believe in individual terror as a principle; I am completely opposed to it. I'll give you a concrete instance. I don't believe in solving this particular argument by shooting off a few people, who are making rude noises. Nor do I [believe] that individual terror can in itself bring you any nearer to what we believe in. Of course not. I believe that individual terror is justified when you have a mass movement, when you have mass support inside a particular society, then it is justified.

Could one disapprove of the Canadian Trotskyists thinking: "Defend us from our friends; we can defend ourselves from our enemies"?

In seeking the source of the ultrared coloration of the IMG, the personal inclinations of the majority of its leaders should not be taken as the decisive determinant. It can hardly be questioned that some of them feel more comfortable in a red T-shirt adorned with their totem than in less imaginative dress. It is understandable that in trying to recruit from the radicalizing youth they are responsive to a certain degree to the pressure of this milieu. Yet

their intentions are the best. The key point to bear in mind is that they are only trying to *apply* the orientation adopted by the last world congress.

Indeed, from this standpoint, they are rather consistent. If urban guerrilla warfare works for the Tupamaros in a city as large as Montevideo, is it logical to exclude experimenting with it in other large cities? Robin Blackburn, a member of the editorial board of the *Red Mole*, is excited over what the Weatherpeople have done in the U.S.; and other members, it seems, became similarly enthused over what was done in Montréal by the FLQ commandos.

One would think that the majority leadership of the Fourth International would recognize the truly *dangerous* implications flowing from the guerrilla orientation they sponsored at the last world congress.

No Scapegoats, Please

Let me turn now to a question that at first sight seems hardly worth taking up but that on further examination turns out to be of some concern.

In the article I wrote, "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America," I included a section entitled "The Extraordinary Value of Hugo Blanco's Work." In summarizing the facts, I mentioned the name of Comrade Nahuel Moreno.⁷⁴ Comrade Maitan agrees by and large with what I wrote about the gains made in Peru before the imprisonment of Comrade Blanco. He objects, however, to my mentioning the name of Comrade Moreno in the way I did. In a footnote, Comrade Maitan says:

In his document Hansen presents Moreno in a very favorable light, writing: "Our first big advance came in Peru through the work of Hugo Blanco, carried out with the active participation of Argentine comrades like Daniel Pereyra and Eduardo Creus under the leadership of Comrade Nahuel Moreno." A stage in the life of our Peruvian movement, on which the opinions of the participants are, to say the least, divided, is presented in a grossly oversimplified way. Furthermore, it is not our movement's style to use expressions like "under the leadership of Comrade Nahuel Moreno," which should be avoided even if they had any correspondence with the reality.⁷⁵

My comment was based on what I saw at the time during a trip in which I visited both Peru and Argentina as well as other countries.⁷⁶ It is true that sharp tactical differences subsequently

arose among the comrades. I did not go into these because the conclusions to be drawn would not have changed the overall lesson that one of the prime reasons for the defeat suffered in Peru in 1963 "was the absence of a Leninist combat party on a national scale." Despite Comrade Maitan's criticism, I am still of the opinion that what I said about Comrade Moreno's role was factually accurate.

Of course, Comrade Maitan had his own sources of information at the time I visited Peru and Argentina; that is, the *Buró Latinoamericano* (BLA), which operated under the leadership of J. Posadas.⁷⁷ While I never met Posadas himself to my knowledge, I did meet various members of the BLA. My impression was that they were not to be trusted as sources of information. Nothing that has happened since has caused me to change this opinion. However, I am quite willing to consider any evidence in Comrade Maitan's possession that might lead me to reconsider.

Comrade Maitan's footnote is appended to a sharp political attack against Comrade Moreno. The basis utilized for this is a document "by Comrade Moreno at the end of 1967" that takes as a starting point in analyzing the revolutionary reality in the southern end of South America the fact that Inti Peredo and his guerrilla group still survived after the death of Che Guevara. According to the quotation, Comrade Moreno wrote that the number one task is "first to save and then to consolidate the ELN and Inti as its unchallenged leader. There is no more urgent task than this."

Comrade Maitan cites an additional paragraph in which Comrade Moreno insists on the importance of OLAS and the importance of joining "its armed detachments" or helping

to create them where they do not exist. This means loyal and disciplined recognition of the leadership of OLAS, recognition of the disciplined and centralized character which the struggle and its Latin-American organization must have, and most of all the need to maintain direct contact with the Cuban leadership, which is the unchallenged leadership of the continental civil war and of OLAS. It also means our unconditional entry into its armed detachments"

Comrade Maitan then says:

This piece is unique as a *mélange* of mechanical formulations, opportunism, adventurism, and distortion of the objective facts. But how can it be explained that after writing this Moreno opted for the minority line and that Comrade Hansen has never had the least occasion to differentiate himself from him?⁷⁸

To further understand the context of Comrade Maitan's remarks and his bringing in the quotations, it should be noted that he is responding to my raising the question of whether the Bolivian comrades in becoming engaged in Inti Peredo's guerrilla front in Bolivia were aware that he held a *foquista* concept and was opposed to forming a political party.

Comrade Maitan unfortunately did not provide the source of the quotation. This did not facilitate my search to find it. Thus, as yet, I have not been able to check it in the original. I do not thereby challenge its existence. There are gaps in my files owing mainly to the fact that the comrades in many countries in Latin America, including Argentina, have had to work in underground conditions for long years. Sometimes they overlook sending documents to New York. In certain instances, while they mail them, they never get through. Consequently I can make only a rough approximation of the context in which such a unique *mélange*, as Comrade Maitan puts it, "of mechanical formulations, opportunism, adventurism, and distortions of the objective facts" could have been written.

1. The Argentine comrades were doing their best to support the Bolivian section in the course being followed there. Thus the October 16, 1967, issue of *La Verdad* carried an article on the situation in Bolivia "by well-known leader Hugo González Moscoso."⁷⁹

2. Fidel Castro's confirmation October 18, 1967, that Che Guevara had been killed (he was executed October 9), set off a wave of mourning among leftists everywhere, in which the world Trotskyist movement participated. The date cited by Comrade Maitan for the quotation he used would indicate that it was written in this period.

3. In a document written in January 1968 and published in *Estrategia*, no. 7, September 1968, Comrade Moreno mentions the Peredo brothers only as belonging to the Bolivian Communist Party. Guevara made a mistake, in Comrade Moreno's opinion, in relying on this party, although the fact that he did was a hopeful sign that the Cubans through OLAS were overcoming their previous backwardness on the political level and might be on the road to developing a correct political program for the revolutionary struggle in Latin America.

4. It is quite true that Comrade Moreno was strongly of the opinion at the time that OLAS was a most hopeful development and that the Trotskyists should participate in it and strive to help move it *from within* toward adoption of a program of democratic

and transitional demands. Although I do not share some of Comrade Moreno's formulations, I think his basic political reaction was correct. As part of the process of testing out what might develop, it was necessary to assume the sincerity of the delegates in adopting the aims declared at the OLAS conference. Comrade Moreno, of course, was also a strong partisan of a continental strategy of armed struggle under the leadership of the Cubans.

Comrade Maitan wonders how it is to be explained that after writing this Moreno opted for the minority line. . . .

I do not find this so difficult to explain. I assume he did so in the light of further consideration of the changing situation in Latin America and in the light of the discussion preparatory to the last world congress.

In any case, we can count on Comrade Moreno to speak for himself during the discussion leading up to the next world congress and to specify—as he did at the last world congress—where he has differences, if any, on some points with both positions.

A graver matter must be considered in connection with this.

At the last world congress, the delegates had to weigh the claims of two factions as to which represented the majority of the Argentine section. On the basis of the available evidence, it was decided that the group associated with *El Combatiente* had a majority. Since it was not possible to reach an agreement on unifying the two tendencies within one organization, particularly because of the adamant attitude of the newly recognized majority, the group associated with *La Verdad* was recognized as a sympathizing organization.⁸⁰ Both sides agreed to refrain from attacking each other publicly and to do their best to reunite their forces as soon as possible.

It must be emphasized that the basis for recognizing the *El Combatiente* group as the majority was the number of members claimed to be in favor of its positions. *The decision was not made on the basis of any political differences.* These were far from clear.

Since the last world congress, the *El Combatiente* tendency has split into at least three warring groups, each of them vying publicly with the others.

In view of this fact, the question inevitably arises: What was the nature of the "majority" that was recognized at the last world congress? Was it an *unprincipled combination*? If not, how is its

sudden division into at least three tendencies to be explained?

Comrade Maitan does not address himself to this crucial question. Instead he utilizes my passing reference to Comrade Moreno to open up a political attack against him.

Without thereby implying that Comrade Maitan had any direct connection with them, some further items should be noted.

The May 1, 1970, issue of the *Red Mole* printed an extensive interview

with a leading Argentinian comrade from the revolutionary Peronist tendency which developed inside the mass Peronist movement.⁸¹ This tendency is now in a united front with the PRT (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, the Argentinian section of the Fourth International), with a section of the Communist Party, and with the Camilistas (revolutionary Catholics who call themselves after the Colombian guerrilla priest Camilo Torres).⁸²

The *Red Mole* asked this "leading Argentinian comrade" if he could "tell us more about the PRT."

"The PRT," he responded, "after kicking Moreno out, with his propagandist and syndicalist positions, had most of its strength in Tucuman. . . ."

Why did the editorial board of the *Red Mole* print this public attack against Comrade Moreno? Some, at least, of the editorial board members knew that three things were wrong with it: (1) It was a lie to say that Comrade Moreno had been kicked out. (2) The political characterization of his position was a distortion. (3) To print an attack of this kind was in violation of the decision reached at the last world congress.

The next item is to be found in the centerfold of the June 29, 1970, issue of *Rouge*⁸³—a translation in full of the interview that was printed by the *Red Mole*, including the public political attack against Comrade Moreno and the lie that he had been "expelled" (*exclu*) from the PRT, which a footnote explains is the Argentine section of the Fourth International.

Item number three is more current. This is a statement in the form of questions and answers published in the January-February 1971 issue of the Buenos Aires magazine *Cristianismo y Revolución* (Christianity and Revolution) which the editors identify as having been received from the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (Revolutionary Army of the People).

The first question is: "What is the ERP and when was it born?"

A long answer follows. The first paragraph reads as follows:

The ERP was born as a consequence of a political decision of the last congress of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT) held last July. The fourth congress of the party, in 1968, initiated the process that culminated in the creation of the ERP by expelling the rightist faction of Nahuel Moreno. An intense stage of ideological struggle was then opened against the reformist and syndicalist tendencies of the party by those who sought to consolidate the proposal of "organizing a combat party."

In the second paragraph we are informed:

In an at times confused process, which we have defined as the "class struggle" within the party, a battle was waged against (a) a reformist current that still exists in certain sectors of the organization, and (b) against a tendency that hid its centrism behind defense of the classical concept of a "Bolshevik Party." During these two years the party advanced, confusedly but firmly—incorporating the experience of the continental revolution in the decade of the seventies, incorporating and discussing the principles of "Maoism," and the propositions of "Marighellism" and of the "Tupamaros," thus indicating its permanent radicalization.

After listing a number of achievements, including "expropriations, bombings, etc.," the statement refers to the Fifth Congress of July 1970, where a firm decision was reached to remove the "internal contradictions" so as to reach a new level of struggle. "The congress then reaffirmed this central thesis: 'Consolidation of a classical revolutionary party, ideologically socialist and participating actively in the proletarian internationalism of the Fourth International led by Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank, and Alain Krivine.'"

(May we hope for a footnote in Comrade Maitan's next article pointing out that it is not in our movement's style to use expressions like "led by Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank, and Alain Krivine"?)

The above statement is by the grouping currently enjoying, if I am not mistaken, Comrade Maitan's support as the "majority" in Argentina.

One more item will complete the unpleasant list we have been compelled to consider. This is a lengthy document, dated November 24, 1970, and signed by "Domingo," that is circulating in South America under the title "The Crisis of the Trotskyist Movement in Argentina."⁸⁴ The Spanish text, we trust, will be

translated into other languages, including English, and submitted as part of the international discussion. I will quote merely some of the statements bearing directly on the point regarding the attack on Comrade Moreno.

"The world congress," the document states,

decided to recognize the majority tendency (*El Combatiente*) as the Argentinian section, granting the *La Verdad* minority tendency the status of a sympathizing organization. Since that time the *La Verdad* group, disregarding the responsible attitude the congress took in striving to keep the discussion on a political level and adopting a solution that permitted the dissident minority to remain within the framework of the international Trotskyist movement, has indulged in unacceptable factional maneuvers, provoking a deterioration in its relations with the International.⁸⁵

A footnote adduces "evidence" to back up this assertion: "The *La Verdad* group held its national congress without giving advance notice to the International, without sending the documents adopted, or information on the debates. What is worse: a representative of the international minority was invited to attend the congress and in fact participated in it."⁸⁶

On the alleged "representative," this was a member of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. who happened *by coincidence* to arrive in Argentina during the congress, which was held in underground conditions. This "representative," among other matters, gave a full report at the September 1970 meeting of the United Secretariat on what he had observed in Argentina. No one, including Comrade Maitan, challenged his report as being factional.

The November 24 document goes into the crisis of the Argentine section in some detail. As part of the effort to justify his conclusions, the author provides a background going back to 1951, that is, a period of *two decades*. This covers three years before the international split in our movement and eleven years before the Reunification Congress of 1963. The purpose of this background material is to single out Comrade Moreno for attack as a leader of the Argentine Trotskyist movement. Everything that is currently wrong is traced back to Comrade Moreno.

The one-sidedness of this "background" can be judged from two simple facts: (1) The author says nothing at all, not a word, about the role played by J. Posadas and his backers in the vicissitudes of the Argentine Trotskyist movement. (2) The author is sim-

ilarly silent about Comrade Moreno's positive association with Comrade Hugo Blanco and the other participants in the work in Peru.

An additional fact to be noted is the author's effort to drive a wedge between the *La Verdad* group and the American Trotskyists. For instance, referring to Comrade Moreno's essay on the Chinese revolution published in *Fifty Years of World Revolution 1917-1967*,⁸⁷ the author adds a footnote: "The SWP comrades found themselves forced to explicitly dissociate themselves from the analyses in this essay."

More of the same is to be found in the document, but this should be sufficient for the time being.

What is the purpose of all this? You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows. The last world congress used a numerical, not a political criterion, to decide which tendency in Argentina represented the majority. If the coming world congress reviews that decision in the light of subsequent developments, it would in all likelihood have to recognize that the *La Verdad* group now constitutes the majority. To block this, a new criterion would have to be found, a political criterion. What seems to be afoot is a concerted effort to find such a criterion, even if it is necessary to go back to 1951.

This would also explain why public attacks have been launched against Comrade Moreno. It is a way of stirring up the factional fires.

II.

In Reply to Comrades Germain and Knoeller

The Aim of the Latin American Resolution

I am not sure that before writing their article "The Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists in Latin America"⁸⁸ Comrade Ernest Germain and Comrade Martine Knoeller had an opportunity to read Comrade Maitan's article "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America—Defense of an Orientation and a Method," even though Comrade Maitan dates his article more than a month earlier than theirs. Consequently I am not sure whether they thought he had written "an insufficient document" or whether they had already written their article and decided to submit it anyway even though it repeated some of Comrade Maitan's best arguments.

However that may be, Comrade Maitan holds prior claim owing to the earlier date of his article. That is one reason why I took it up first. Another is that I consider him to have established his priority as the ideological leader of the tendency in the Fourth International that has turned to guerrilla warfare as an "orientation and a method."

Although others had advocated engagement in guerrilla warfare—perhaps in some instances as an orientation and in others as a tactic—no one will dispute, I suppose, that Comrade Maitan was the first in the central leadership to go on record (in his May 15, 1968, letter, "An Insufficient Document") with a blunt statement on the imperative need for the Fourth International to determine "in what countries we have the best chance of a breakthrough and subordinating everything to the elementary necessity for a success in these countries, and even, if necessary, in a single country."

It was in this same letter that he stated, ". . . we must place everything above all on a sector of Latin America and you know very well which one."

It was in this letter, too, that he permitted himself to express

himself "a little paradoxically: it is necessary to understand and to explain that at the present stage the International will be built around Bolivia."

This was the basic viewpoint from which the "orientation and method" flowed that Comrade Maitan argued for so eloquently at the last world congress and that proved so attractive to a majority of the delegates.

Comrades Germain and Knoeller do not discuss this. Perhaps that is because they hold a different view from his on what is the best way to present the orientation and method, and to defend it from criticism.

In contrast to Comrade Maitan, whose main objective was to put the Fourth International in a practical way on the road to guerrilla action as a "strategy" that would lead to a "break-through" in a selected Latin American country, Comrades Germain and Knoeller conceive that the Latin American document at the last world congress had in the main a different intent. "Its purpose was to define the position of the Fourth International in the great ideological debate that is polarizing the revolutionary vanguard in Latin American."⁸⁹

Good. But then what line defines that position? And what course of action is proposed aside from engaging in the great ideological debate?

Once adopted, Comrade Maitan's orientation and method certainly determined how the position of the Fourth International would be defined in public debates; it also determined what should be done in practice in the field of action.

While I am on this point, I should like to say that Comrades Germain and Knoeller, as responsible leaders, are duty-bound, it appears to me, to concern themselves with the origin of Comrade Maitan's position as voiced in his letter "An Insufficient Document" and to express their views on it, the better to clarify the framework within which they have taken their position.

Why did they fail to do this? A possible explanation is that it is but one facet of a basic contradiction running throughout their document. This is the contradiction between the real situation and their preconceptions or, perhaps better, misjudgments of it.

The Debate in the Latin American Vanguard

A good example to begin with is the contradiction between the reality of the "great ideological debate" going on in Latin America and Comrades Germain and Knoeller's view of it.

The "real and actual debate of the Latin-American vanguard," they say, is "for or against the strategy of armed struggle."

It is a debate between those holding to the "strategic orientation" of overthrowing the bourgeois state in Latin America and those maintaining a "neoreformist and neo-Stalinist variant of revolution by stages. . . ."

The truth is that the debate in this simplified form came to a peak at the OLAS conference in 1967. The issue was posed as "armed struggle" versus "peaceful coexistence," with some fire being directed at those, like Rodney Arismendi, who sought to straddle the issue.

In that debate we stood with the Cuban leaders and such guerrilla fighters as Francisco Prada who charged the right-wing leadership of the Venezuelan Communist Party with betrayal.⁹⁰ Our movement took a public position in this struggle against the Stalinists and in support of the revolutionists who had come to realize the perfidiousness of Stalinism and the fact that it was not revolutionary but just the contrary.

In reality there were three main positions: (1) The position of "peaceful coexistence" represented by the unreconstructed Stalinists, called "right-wing betrayers" at the OLAS conference. (2) The position of Francisco Prada, Fidel Castro, and others, favoring a "strategy" of armed struggle—mainly, at the time, rural guerrilla warfare on a continental scale for a prolonged period. (3) The Trotskyist position holding to the orientation and method of building revolutionary socialist combat parties in the Leninist model.

We supported the advocates of guerrilla warfare in this specific battle with the Latin American advocates of peaceful coexistence, but we did not fuse with them, or give up our program. We never lost sight of the fact that *these revolutionists were not debating as Leninists*. They were debating as protagonists of the "strategy" of armed struggle.

Even at that time they were not entirely sure of their position. At the OLAS conference, particularly in the corridors and in the private discussions, it was clear that some of the delegates—and not unimportant ones—were uneasy over the defeats suffered by the guerrilla movement (this was *before* the death of Che Guevara). They were bothered by the ineffectiveness of the *strategy*.

These delegates, I repeat, were in the forefront of the struggle against the Stalinist position of a "peaceful" or "electoral" road to power in Latin America. They were not armchair strategists.

Some of them were active participants in the guerrilla fronts of that time.

It was certainly justified to hope that through further experience and further discussion these revolutionists would develop toward Leninism; that is, toward an understanding of the necessity to build a revolutionary socialist party and to bring its capacities to bear in the class struggle in Latin America. Our role, as Trotskyists, was to do what we could to help this process along. That could be accomplished only by advancing from what we already held in common with them (rejection of the Stalinist concepts of "peaceful coexistence," "parliamentary road to power," etc.) to the key point at issue: the need for a revolutionary socialist party.

Actually the debate had already begun and the Trotskyist influence had been registered at least four years earlier. This is clear from the testimony offered by Héctor Béjar in his book *Peru 1965: Notes on a Guerrilla Experience* regarding the impact of the practical revolutionary example set by the small group of Trotskyists under Hugo Blanco in 1961-63.

The debate continued even while the fighters associated with Luis de la Puente, Guillermo Lobatón, Héctor Béjar, Ricardo Gadea, and others were undergoing another tragic experience in 1965 with the "strategy" of armed struggle. The accuracy of the criticisms of the fresh experiment, leveled by the Peruvian Trotskyists at the time (see "The Guerrilla War in Peru," in *World Outlook*, August 6, 1965, p. 9), can be judged by comparing them with the admissions in Béjar's book.

By way of contrast, it ought to be noted that the Latin American resolution passed at the last world congress not only did not criticize the concept that guided Héctor Béjar and his comrades, it approved the concept: "The failure of certain guerrilla experiments (in Peru, for example) came about, in large measure, more from errors in assessing the situation, the trends, and the relationship of forces among the masses than from errors in conception."⁹¹ The resolution stands below the critical level reached by Béjar!

How difficult it is for activists like Béjar to draw the main lesson concerning the need for a revolutionary party is shown by the fact that in his book he polemicizes against party building. Even after the experience of such a spectacular succession of defeats as the ones suffered by Guevara and the Peredo brothers, Béjar is still biased against party building, viewing bureaucrat-

ism as inherent in the structure of a party, whatever the original intent or program of its founders might be.

Finally, we have the example in 1970, cited earlier, of a current Brazilian protagonist and practitioner of the "strategy" of armed struggle, Ladislav Dowbor, who is quite consciously anti-Leninist in the sense of believing that this "strategy" supersedes the Leninist strategy of building a revolutionary party.

Let me repeat: There are three main positions in the "great ideological debate": (1) Those like the Stalinists who believe in or argue for the feasibility of a "parliamentary road" to power. (2) The Trotskyists, who have been defending the Leninist concept of party building and who have been struggling to apply it, an outstanding instance being Hugo Blanco. (3) Those under the influence of the Cubans particularly, who advance the "strategy" of armed struggle in opposition to both the protagonists of a "parliamentary road" and the partisans of the Leninist concept.

Shifts have occurred in the course of this debate.

First of all, the school that placed precedence on guerrilla warfare has been declining. This is ascribable to the lowering of the Cuban commitment along these lines and to the fact that this "strategy" has yielded no major victories for the past decade.

Secondly, the Stalinist current has been strengthened somewhat. The Cubans lost out, by and large, in their factional struggle with the "right wing" betrayers. One of the results was a revival of Popular Frontism in Latin America.

Among the items enabling us to understand the underlying reasons for this are the failure of the Cubans to come to grips with Stalinism (out of disdain for the history and theory of Bolshevism and their concern for the economic and diplomatic support supplied by Moscow which was essential to Cuba's defense against U.S. imperialism), the failure of the Cubans to appreciate that their own victory had caused U.S. imperialism to initiate countermeasures that reduced the effectiveness of guerrilla warfare, the failure of the Cubans to see how the Leninist concept of party building in Latin America could open the way to overcoming the new difficulties.

Thirdly, the Trotskyist tendency has become stronger in various ways, including the adherence of fresh forces. At the same time new differences and even divisions have occurred in our movement, as a sector responded to the arguments and "exemplary" actions of the strategists of guerrilla warfare. This

influence was reflected in the "turn" adopted by the majority at the last world congress.

How could one get a picture of the reality of the debate so different from the view that Comrades Germain and Knoeller have of it?

The answer is that this is the picture that emerges from observing the debate in its development as a whole, over a sufficient period of time, paying attention to the trends, and not forgetting, above all, to observe the origin and evolution of the thinking of different currents in the Trotskyist movement itself in relation to changes in the milieu and the composition of the membership, and to such stabilizing factors as the political maturity of the cadres and the experience and continuity of the leadership.

Point of Qualitative Change

This way of analyzing the broad debate likewise leads to a view different from that presented by Comrades Germain and Knoeller on how to place the discussion that has been going on inside the world Trotskyist movement. For it follows from the above analysis that the last world congress marked a point of qualitative change and that this, in and of itself, demands explanation.

Why, for instance, did the change occur in 1969 and not in 1965, or 1963, or earlier?

Special interest attaches to why the change did not occur in 1963, the year of the reunification of the world Trotskyist movement. One of the factors that made reunification possible on a principled basis was a common appreciation of the significance of the Cuban revolution, including the role that guerrilla warfare had played in the victory.

If either of the two sides could be said to have been more influenced by the tactics used by the Cubans, it was, in my opinion, the International Committee, inasmuch as its forces in Argentina had already attracted the interest of Che Guevara, and some of them, as in Peru, had experimented with guerrilla warfare.

Out of this practical experience with guerrilla warfare, the majority of the International Committee came to definite conclusions concerning the limitations of guerrilla warfare in Latin America. In particular the lesson was drawn that while it is an advantageous tactic in certain situations, it can, unless it is

properly held to an auxiliary role, prove completely disruptive to the process of party building.

Thus had anyone proposed a resolution at the Reunification Congress lifting guerrilla warfare from a tactic to a "strategy," the forces of the International Committee would have been overwhelmingly against it.

Whatever changes may have occurred in the views of individual leaders of the Fourth International in the following period, the same consensus would have prevailed in December 1965 at the second congress following reunification, particularly in view of the fresh defeats suffered in Peru by protagonists of the "strategy" of armed struggle.

Still leaving aside how certain individuals may have viewed the question, the shift that was eventually registered in the form of a qualitative change in majority opinion at the 1969 congress originated, I think, in relation to the OLAS conference in Havana in 1967.

The implications of the debates and decisions taken there were that the Cubans intended to become directly involved in guerrilla actions on the continent. This signified a considerable alteration in the situation—the Cubans had at their disposal the resources of state power.

Some very practical questions at once confronted the Latin American Trotskyists, especially in the areas of key interest to the Cubans. The main one, as had already become clear from reports in the press before the OLAS conference, was Bolivia. The Bolivian Trotskyists were therefore confronted with an acute tactical question. Their decision was to participate. They were excluded from Che Guevara's front but did become involved when the struggle was reopened under Inti Peredo.

However, let us note carefully two provisos: (1) It was—whatever the opportunities—still regarded by our movement at that time as a *tactical* question. (2) It was *contingent*, so far as substantial resources were concerned, on the involvement of the Cubans.

In many circles the disastrous end of the guerrilla front opened by Che Guevara did not dampen enthusiasm for the "strategy" of armed struggle, although it certainly led the Cubans to pause for reflection. In fact, the disaster had an opposite effect on a not inconsiderable layer. Their enthusiasm for the "strategy" increased.

In my opinion, this was because of Guevara's martyrdom.

Instead of cold analysis of the political reasons for the defeat, an emotional reaction swept the entire Left, particularly the radicalizing youth. Che Guevara became enshrined as an exemplary figure in his devotion to the revolutionary cause, and the halo extended to his "strategy" of armed struggle.

Then came the May-June 1968 events in France, out of which our French comrades succeeded in gaining a new levy many times the size of their group before the sudden immense upsurge. Along with this big influx of recruits came some rather sharp problems connected with Maoism, spontanéism, ultraleftism, and other characteristics of some of the radicalizing youth in various countries at the time. These could be worked out only through further experience, discussion, and debate—all requiring time.

In the Fourth International, forces had thus accumulated that were ready to respond to an appeal on the urgency and the realizability of a "breakthrough." This ingredient was supplied by Comrade Maitan, as I have already pointed out.

It was this combination and not any "manipulation" of delegates that explains why the last congress, and not an earlier one, made the "turn" toward the "strategy" of armed struggle. This also explains why the Fourth International came to such a position only ten years after the victory of the Cuban revolution.

And it explains the curious fact that in taking this course at such a belated date, we may pass guerrilla fighters moving in the opposite direction (like some of the Weatherpeople) as a result of conclusions reached on their own, a possibility noted by Hugo Blanco.⁹²

We are provided, too, with a political explanation of the fact that Comrade Maitan and others were prepared in 1969 to push ahead no matter what the objections from the bulk of the forces of the International Committee that had participated in the Reunification Congress in 1963.

By placing the article written by Comrades Germain and Knoeller in this context, which is the real one, it can be more easily understood why their arguments are so singularly wide of the mark, however attractive the verve and eloquence with which they are voiced.

The SWP—Fiction and Reality

To illustrate the meaning of the document on Latin America adopted by the last congress, as they interpret it, Comrades Germain and Knoeller present an imaginary exchange of opinion

between the Bolivian miners and a character named "Comrade Hansen" (who bears little resemblance to the real person, if I may be permitted to express an opinion on this).

The exchange makes for good theater. It includes a chorus of "thousands of miners and other vanguard Bolivian workers," who, insisting on the need to defend themselves right now by means of armed struggle, respond with fitting irony to the "nice program" for the future offered by "Comrade Hansen."

The following passage jumps out: "and if Comrade Hansen thinks that it is enough to answer them, 'Build a revolutionary party before thinking about military self defense,' they would be still more justified in replying. . . ." ⁹³

Let me repeat that the words put in my mouth exist solely in the imagination of Comrades Germain and Knoeller. They, of course, expected no one to take this as anything but hyperbole on their part. That they could imagine it, however, and put it down as part of an argument suggests a certain estimation on their part not only of my way of thinking but of that of the Socialist Workers Party as a whole. The estimation is that we are quite rigid, mechanical, and even conservative—that we agree on the necessity of armed defense only in a single category, outlined by them as the "classical" variant of armed struggle, which I will come to later.

If Comrades Germain and Knoeller really believe this, it would be much easier to eliminate any misunderstandings if they said it outright, for then we could answer it just as frankly and avoid the temptation of competing as playwrights.

In another passage, Comrades Germain and Knoeller include a comparison that would seem to indicate they see a parallel between the position I have argued for and the one held by "Healy and other sectarians." I will cite the entire paragraph:

Likewise, in seeking to *counterpose* party building to the strategy of armed struggle, Comrade Hansen is leading the discussion into a blind alley. In the same way, party building could be counterposed to any strategy, for example participating in mass demonstrations. This is the error Healy and other sectarians make who have reproached the SWP for participating in the antiwar movement, the Black nationalist movement, and the women's liberation movement rather than "building the revolutionary party." The SWP has replied correctly to these infantile objections that there is no other way to build a revolutionary *party*—as opposed to a sect or religious-type cult—than formulating a correct strategy corresponding to the concerns and needs of the masses themselves.⁹⁴

I do not know if this is sufficient to *prove* that Comrades Germain and Knoeller hold the view that in the current discussion the SWP is arguing for a “nice” but “sectarian” program on a par with that of the Healyites and other sectarians, but their references are enough to lead me to suspect it.

In any case, their estimate of the SWP position is also a component of the discussion. For purposes of clarification, it would be advantageous to know whether they view the SWP as sectarian—at least in this instance. And, if they do hold this opinion, it would be advantageous to know if they think the SWP took this sectarian direction only recently, or whether they would put the date further in the past. I doubt that they hold the view that the SWP was *always* sectarian, for they refer [on page 107] to the SWP’s “revolutionary tradition” and to my own “revolutionary background.”

So if they hold the view that the SWP has become conservatized, will they please tell us when this occurred? Was it during the years of battling McCarthyism, or more recently with the entrance into the party of a generation of youth who became revolutionists under the influence of the Cuban revolution and the Black liberation struggle? Or still more recently with the growth of American Trotskyism as an outcome of its efforts to mobilize the American people against the U.S. imperialist invasion of Vietnam so as to help speed the victory of the Vietnamese revolution?

On the other hand, if they do not believe that the SWP has become conservatized it would help the discussion if they would state this clearly and emphatically.

Is Armed Struggle a Mass Movement?

It may prove useful to examine in closer detail the argument advanced in the paragraph cited above.

From one angle, Comrades Germain and Knoeller appear to consider the armed-struggle movement to be a mass movement, like the antiwar movement, the Black nationalist movement, and the women’s liberation movement.

Let us consider this. The SWP participated in the latter three movements precisely because they *are* mass movements. The SWP does this, in contrast to the Healyites and other sectarians, regardless of the current program or leaderships of these movements. In working in these mass movements, the SWP fights for transitional and democratic demands that will help pave the way

for mass acceptance of the program of revolutionary socialism.

At present, however, neither in the U.S. nor in Latin America is armed struggle a mass movement. It is a strategy proposed by some as a substitute for the strategy of party building, which a few small groups are trying to put into practice in isolation from the masses. In the antiwar movement, the Black nationalist movement, and elsewhere, the SWP encounters protagonists of the strategy of armed struggle and guerrilla warfare. Some of them are consciously anti-Leninists like Ladislav Dowbor. We argue against them on a programmatic level, pointing out that armed struggle represents, as a form or stage of the class struggle, the sharpest possible challenge to the state—a challenge that is best not undertaken lightly.

If armed struggle existed today as a mass movement, like those mentioned, the situation would indeed be revolutionary and the entire discussion we are engaged in would be decidedly out of place.

It is precisely because armed struggle does not exist in the form of a mass movement that we find the question of how to reach the masses and how to lead them to victory at the heart of the entire dispute, not least of all in Latin America.

But Comrades Germain and Knoeller do not hold to the comparison they advanced. They suddenly switch to a different question that has nothing to do with what they have just argued. They switch to the necessity of “formulating a correct strategy corresponding to the concerns and needs of the masses themselves.”

Ordinarily I would not argue against that. The phrase is so abstract that it appears to be in complete consonance with the Leninist position advanced long ago that we can formulate a correct strategy corresponding to the concerns and needs of the masses themselves by participating in their struggles, learning from them, advancing well-timed transitional and democratic demands, fighting opposing currents, and building a leadership capable of following through to victory. This is the strategy of organizing a revolutionary socialist party.

Unfortunately Comrades Germain and Knoeller have shifted to such a level of abstraction that they find it no contradiction to say in the very next sentences on the same page:

The fact is that the strategy of preparing for [note the “preparing for”—the ground shifts again in the argument] armed struggle, in most Latin-American countries, corresponds in precisely this way to the needs and

preoccupations of the masses, to all their fighting experience over the last ten years. In these conditions, we will answer Comrade Hansen as the SWP answered Healy, that there is no way to build revolutionary parties in Latin America without adopting a correct position on one of the key strategic questions posed by the vanguard and the masses [how did "the vanguard" suddenly slip in at this point?]-preparation for the armed struggle.⁹⁵

We are back where we began, or almost back. If we have not got lost in trying to follow the ins and outs of this reasoning, "preparation" for armed struggle is equivalent to actual engagement in a real mass movement like the antiwar movement.

And what is "preparation"? It might mean only propaganda—"public defense" of the famous "strategy"—as we can gather from the next sentence: "Far from being mutually contradictory, party building, propaganda and agitation for transitional demands, and *public defense* of the strategy of armed struggle are inseparable and complementary in the present conditions in Latin America" (emphasis added).

Elsewhere, however, we are told that decidedly more is involved than propaganda for the strategy of armed struggle: ". . . and by correct position we do not mean a purely literary and propagandistic position but also a *minimum of practical application* . . ." (emphasis added).⁹⁶

A "minimum" is how much? Occasional small armed actions by a small group? Continual small armed actions by a somewhat larger group? In any case, *not a mass action*.

If the theory is that in carrying out a "minimum of practical application," one of the minimum acts might luckily serve as a detonator, touching off a social explosion, this amounts to adventurism of the grossest kind.

A "minimum of practical application" refers, I suppose, to "exemplary actions" not intended to detonate anything but just to serve as a source of inspiration to others to go and do likewise, mass movement or no mass movement.

The most significant feature of the admonition by Comrades Germain and Knoeller to engage in a "minimum of practical application" is its abstractness. It is linked to no specific country, to no definite time, to no particular revolutionary organization, to no concrete stage of the class struggle, to no mass movement at all. It stands in polar opposition to the concreteness demanded by Lenin in considering such questions.

And why "minimum" of practical application? If it's worth doing at all, isn't it worth doing to the *maximum*?

This is probably the place to take note of an argument used by Comrade Maitan. He asks: "Has Comrade Hansen . . . ever thought of opposing building the party and participating in a general strike?"⁹⁷

My answer is: No, I never have. But I have met revolutionists who have done just that. What for us is a tactical question is not so to them. They consider advocating and working for a general strike to be a strategy, a surefire way of winning a revolution.

Comrade Maitan's analogy is a telling one. It happens, however, to speak against elevating armed struggle into a strategy.

Politics of the "Death Wish"

Another argument advanced by Comrades Germain and Knoeller ends up rather unexpectedly upon close examination.

Seeking to counter my observations on the consequences of the succession of defeats suffered by the guerrilla fighters in Latin America for the past ten years, Comrades Germain and Knoeller say:

He puts great stress on the heavy losses and disastrous defeats resulting from the guerrilla struggle in Latin America over the last ten years. What, then, is the mysterious reason why so many revolutionists and revolutionary groups in Latin America remain partisans of armed struggle, despite these losses? Is this out of a pure death wish or blind romanticism? Still, grave losses usually force militants to react, even those most set in their ways. *Two years* after the 1933 defeat in Germany neither the Communist nor the Socialist party dared repeat the policy that led to the disaster. Isn't ten years time in Latin America enough for people to draw the minimum lessons from catastrophic errors?"⁹⁸

Prolonged persistence in errors is explainable only by something irrational like a death wish? Isn't ten years time enough? But Comrades Germain and Knoeller imply elsewhere that I may be guilty of a "fundamentally idealist" error.⁹⁹ How is that to be explained? Such an error could be traced back, if one wanted to, for perhaps 2,500 years—anyway, longer than I care to remember.

A more relevant example of the persistence of errors may be worth considering. I called attention above to the publicity given by *Scanlan's* and the *Black Panther* to urban guerrilla warfare in the United States. On turning the pages of these publications and noting the testimonials, recommendations, and detailed information concerning guns, explosives, and sniper fire, those familiar

with the history of the American socialist movement will inevitably be reminded of the lessons handed down from the 1880s. Virtually the same errors are being repeated, not ten, but ninety years later.

For comrades who may not know this background, let me take a few paragraphs to fill them in.

On October 9, 1886, seven out of eight defendants in a Chicago court were condemned to death. In passing sentence, Judge Joseph E. Gary said that the conviction was not based on "any personal participation in the particular act" for which they had been dragged into court—killing one policeman and wounding seventy others by throwing a bomb. They were condemned because "by speech and print" they had espoused the overthrow of the government by force and violence. Of the seven, two were spared by the governor, one committed suicide, four were eventually hanged. These were the Haymarket martyrs.¹⁰⁰

It was proved at the time that they were victims of a most brazen frame-up. But their press in the preceding years had been filled with articles favoring force and violence, particularly the use of bombs.

These declamations did not draw much attention from the American ruling class until the Chicago "anarchists," under the leadership of Albert Parsons,¹⁰¹ began to connect up with the working class by expressing its needs and current preoccupations through such slogans as "For an eight-hour day." The headway made by Parsons and his comrades became quite palpable when, amidst a general labor upsurge, they became involved in local strike struggles.

Then the ruling class did pay attention. The speeches and writings on "dynamite" as "man's best and last friend" were utilized to frame up the authors in a bombing that was most likely provoked, if not directly organized, by the police themselves.

Worst of all, the frame-up was utilized to launch a nationwide witch-hunt that virtually decimated the socialist movement and stunned the entire labor movement. The revival began not with dynamitings or similar ways of moving "from the word to the deed," as Robin Blackburn might put it. The revival began with political defense work for the Haymarket victims on an international scale, followed by a new rise in working-class militancy associated with economic issues.

It ought to be remembered that before going to his death on the gallows on November 11, 1887, Albert Parsons regretted the

formulations he and his comrades had used in the previous period, for they had played into the hands of the police and had unnecessarily prejudiced their case.

In defense of the Haymarket martyrs, it should be explained that their undue confidence in the efficacy of dynamite, which they had expounded in speeches and writings, did not originate with them. They got it from the theoreticians of anarchism in Europe; in the final analysis, from the examples set by the Russian terrorists of that period, who, revolver and bomb in hand, thought it possible to topple tsarism by the exemplary actions of small groups and even individuals.

Let it be said further in defense of the Haymarket martyrs that they had no leaders of their own of the caliber of Plekhanov, Lenin, Trotsky, and the other Russian Marxist leaders to set them right on the question of terrorist methods.

After this excursion into the past, let us return to the repetition of the old errors in current publications like *Scanlan's* and the *Black Panther*.

Comrades Germain and Knoeller might argue that these are not errors. They might contend—as they do in the case of Latin America—that the current urge in some circles in the United States to engage in the “strategy” of armed struggle derives from the experiences of the revolutionists and revolutionary groups in the United States itself in the intervening years. However, they themselves exclude that argument. “There is *no question*,” they state, “of mechanically extending this reasoning to all countries in the world, least of all the United States, Japan, Great Britain, Germany, etc.”¹⁰²

In view of this, we have no choice—by their reasoning—except to explain that it is out of a “pure death wish or blind romanticism” that partisans of the “strategy” of armed struggle are to be found today in the United States. For me, a more political explanation would be preferable; and I think one can be found.

Before taking that up, however, let me dispose of the sentence in their argument reading as follows: “*Two years* after the 1933 defeat in Germany neither the Communist nor the Socialist party dared repeat the policy that led to the disaster.”

What had the Communist and Socialist parties learned from the disaster? What correct lessons had they drawn? I would really like to hear more from Comrades Germain and Knoeller on this, for I have been under the impression for a long time that instead of learning from the disaster in Germany, the Communist and Socialist parties if anything went from bad to worse. In fact, two

years later, in 1935, they turned to the policy of the "Popular Front," i.e., open class collaboration.¹⁰³

For the Socialist parties this was not new—their death wish had been operative in some instances since the turn of the century. For the Stalinists the death wish took a new form—from "Third Period" ultraleftism they switched to the most blatant opportunism.¹⁰⁴ The new error helped ruin the Spanish revolution, helped pave the way for Hitler to advance on a European scale, and eventually facilitated the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.

If my arithmetic is not wrong, the Stalinists (and we can, of course, include the Social Democrats) are still practicing Popular Frontism thirty-six years later. A very persistent death wish!

What is important to note is that the length of time in which an error is followed does not thereby suggest that it may be correct and not an error. We should also note that ending an error does not necessarily mean its replacement by a correct course. A still worse course can be followed.

One of the reasons for the persistence of certain errors is sheer inertia—a universal problem in all organizations, including the most militant. An example in our own movement is not difficult to find.

The tactic of entryism *sui generis* was initiated about 1951 or so. It was first conceived as a tactic of limited duration, one of the reasons being a forecast that World War III could be expected to begin in a few years—by 1954, according to some. The war would surely set off a new wave of radicalism, perhaps on the initiative of sectors of the bureaucracies of the old workers' organizations, particularly those tied to the Soviet Union.

The forecast was eventually discarded as erroneous, but the tactic persisted—now justified by new reasons. Whatever validity, if any, was to be found in the tactic in the beginning vanished with time. Yet entryism *sui generis* was carried on for what was it—seventeen or eighteen years? That's almost twice as long as the error of the Latin American guerrilla fighters, if that proves anything. Anyway, it was so long that some of the most ardent advocates and practitioners of this tactic (or had it in reality been elevated into a "strategy"?) felt compelled to admit that burial was, perhaps, overdue. Entryism *sui generis* had come to stand glaringly in the way of progress for our movement.

How ironic that even as entryism *sui generis* was receiving the decent burial it was entitled to, an opposite kind of error was

gestating—the “strategy” of armed struggle. Let us hope that this orientation and method offers less proof of the tenacity of the “death wish” than did its venerable predecessor.

Why They Don’t See Beyond Guerrilla War

So why have the guerrilla fighters in Latin America persisted for ten years in following the “strategy” of engaging in armed struggle instead of the strategy of concentrating on party building and of linking this up with the masses?

Comrades Germain and Knoeller argue that it is because of their practical experience.

This experience can be summed up in a few words. Whatever the different starting points of the mass movements in the various countries of Latin America, everywhere they have come to the same conclusion—that is, *all* forms of struggle that revolutionists have attempted, in close liaison with the masses or in isolation from them, have culminated in armed confrontations with local or international reaction, or both at once, from the moment they began to show the slightest serious progress.¹⁰⁵

The alternative facing the revolutionists in Latin America, according to Comrades Germain and Knoeller, is as follows:

Any refusal to envisage armed confrontations in the near or relatively near future in Latin America can mean only one of two things—either abandonment of all perspective for revolutionary transformation; or a return to the illusion that this transformation will be miraculously possible with the aid or benevolent neutrality of the bourgeois army (or a part of it).¹⁰⁶

In arguing for this conclusion, Comrades Germain and Knoeller say many true things about the economic, social, and political pressures that have led the revolutionists to this position. But, in my opinion, their approach is simplistic. It is accurate to say that the general economic, social, and political pressures in Latin America (and elsewhere) are driving the best representatives of the oppressed onto the road of revolution, and that many of them have learned enough to conclude that the ruling class and its imperialist backers will not relinquish power peacefully. However, this does not mean that these pressures, plus the modicum of insights gained, assure freedom from errors, including sizable ones for a prolonged period and on a continental scale.

Additional factors are operative, especially those associated with the ups and downs of developing a leadership capable of providing correct political guidance. It is remarkable that Comrades Germain and Knoeller fail to see this. Perhaps the reality will become clearer if we list the reasons for the persistence of the erroneous view that there is no alternative to Popular Frontism except guerrilla warfare:

1. *The breaks in the continuity of revolutionary leadership.* Many lessons, won at great cost in struggles of the past, have been lost because of this and are simply not known to the new generation of revolutionists. To this should be added misinterpretation of the lessons of the past ascribable to leaderships that may be honest but that are one-sided, lacking in good judgment, or that are inclined to sectarianism or cultism.

2. *The pernicious role played by consciously counterrevolutionary leaderships.* While the trade union bureaucracies and the Social Democracy share responsibility, the main source of contamination since the bureaucratic caste usurped power in the Soviet Union has been Stalinism. The Kremlin and its lesser imitators have utilized the resources available to state power to bury under a mountain of lies and slanders the truth about Trotsky and his efforts to uphold the program of Leninism.

One of the consequences has been the debasement of theory. Great acquisitions of the past—major lessons drawn from immense experiences—are simply not known to many young revolutionists, or they know about them only in a viciously distorted way.

The Cuban leaders, with their contempt for theory and their polemics against its importance, are both victims and abettors of this debasement.

Among the results has been great confusion about the relationship between Leninism and Stalinism. We need not go into that here, but it should be noted that some of the arguments used by the guerrilla fighters show that they do not distinguish between Stalinism and Leninism—or, for that matter, between Lenin's theory and practice of party building and that of the Social Democrats.

3. *The victories in which guerrilla warfare loomed large.* From the long-range view of history these disclosed not so much the efficacy of guerrilla warfare per se as the extent of the decay and weakness of capitalism on a world scale.

4. *The illegitimate projection of guerrilla warfare into a surefire method.* Victories such as the ones in China and Cuba gave fresh

impetus to the class struggle internationally. In particular they aroused the hopes of a new generation of revolutionists. To them the secret of the successes in China and Cuba and elsewhere appeared to lie in the technique of arms ("power flows from the barrel of a gun"), and it was assumed that this had universal applicability. The elevation of guerrilla warfare into the answer to all problems further eclipsed the example set by the Bolsheviks—already darkened by Stalinism.

5. *What the Cubans did to give further credence to this view.* The Cubans never subjected their own revolution to a searching Marxist analysis. Still less did they ever come to grips with Stalinism. Instead, they fostered simplistic conclusions concerning their success and simplistic efforts to emulate it. Che Guevara himself went so far as to set a personal example in this, opening up a rural *foco* in Bolivia in accordance with the "strategy" of guerrilla warfare.

6. *The logic set in motion by the Cubans in relation to guerrilla warfare.* Whatever second thoughts they may finally have had on the subject (for whatever reasons), the impetus they gave to the "strategy" continued on its own. This has been shown in many forms and in many areas.

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We thus end up with a rational political explanation for the persistence of the errors among the Latin American fighters, particularly those connected with a faulty appreciation (or no appreciation at all) of priorities in the relationship between guerrilla warfare and party building.

And—not by accident, as I think I am entitled to say—we have won the bonus of being able to offer a rational political explanation of why it is possible to see some rather startling repetitions in the United States today of errors made in the past century. This fits in rather neatly with the admiring references to be found in the literature of the North American guerrilla fighters to the examples set by their Latin American co-thinkers, and to the efforts to emulate them in Canada and the United States.

Safety Lies in Guerrilla Warfare

Another argument is adduced by Comrades Germain and Knoeller in support of their position—it's safer to be a guerrilla fighter. The following two paragraphs are particularly eloquent

in defending the view that safety first requires you to pick up the gun:

Compare the losses in guerrillas with the number killed in the massacres of unarmed worker and peasant populations in countries like Peru, Bolivia, and Brazil, and you will understand why these losses do not alarm any of the revolutionists.

We had the same experience during the Nazi occupation. When a certain level of ferocity on the part of the enemy is reached, revolutionists (including, if possible, broader groups and masses) take up arms as a measure of self-defense, even in the physical sense of the term. There were more survivors among the Yugoslav, Polish, and Russian partisans than among the unarmed sectors of the civil population exposed to the Nazi mass arrests (and we are not including the Jews exposed to total extermination). Many more of the armed partisans in all the countries occupied by the Nazis survived than the Communist, Trotskyist, Socialist, and trade-union leaders who let themselves be deported to concentration camps. Many more of the Vietnamese Communists who have been fighting arms in hand for *twenty-five years* have survived than of the Indonesian Communists who refused to engage in such a struggle. This is the historic *dilemma* confronting the revolutionists in many Latin-American countries.¹⁰⁷

A careful analysis of this string of statements will lead us, I think, to conclude that the historic dilemma confronting the revolutionists is somewhat different from the one indicated by Comrades Germain and Knoeller.

1. *It is simply not true that the revolutionists consider the casualties suffered by the guerrillas in their defeats to be inconsequential.* Of course, the dead are unable to bear witness as to the lessons of their experience, except in a mute way. Some of the survivors and new forces interested in the balance sheet view the losses not so much in the context of the murder and even massacre of unarmed workers, peasants, and other sectors of the populace as in the context of the political objectives and means used by the guerrillas. It was precisely because their course led to defeat after defeat that the revolutionists came to ask whether the lives of cadres were being *wasted*; i.e., not contributing to overturning capitalism any more than if they had met their death unarmed. (The thinking on this is shown quite clearly in Bernadine Dohrn's letter cited above.)

The question of how cadres can best be utilized to advance the revolution stands at the heart of the debate now going on among the revolutionists in Latin America and elsewhere.

The masses themselves seem to have indicated that they, too, have an opinion. They have shown this by their actions, particularly their refusal to follow the prescriptions and examples enjoined upon them by the guerrillas.

Thus another question came up willy-nilly in the debate: What is the correct road to the masses? Or can the capitalist state, after all, be overthrown without their participation?—as Comrade Maitan held to be possible, at least in certain instances.

2. *The experience under the Nazis is far from being conclusive.* Perhaps the most striking thing about this argument is what it tells of the difficulty faced by Comrades Germain and Knoeller in trying to observe their own stricture about keeping things confined to Latin America. Seeking items to support their case, they find themselves compelled to go to another continent—hardly one that is colonial or semicolonial—back in time by some three decades and under the conditions of World War II. I will return later to what this shows about the logic of their position.

If the lesson of the resistance against the Nazi occupation, as explained by them, is applicable at all to Latin America, then one can hardly avoid the conclusion that Comrades Germain and Knoeller are of the opinion that against the violence of the ruling class in Latin America no alternative exists except to engage in guerrilla struggle. But in a footnote [p. 108], they indignantly deny holding this view. So why do they refer to the experience under the Nazi occupation as a valid analogy?

Let us leave this inconsistency aside and consider their argument from another point of view. Revolutionists took up arms, they report, as a measure of self-defense, even in the physical sense of the term, and there were more survivors among the Yugoslav, Polish, and Russian partisans than among the unarmed sectors of the civil population exposed to the Nazi mass arrests.

It is true in general, one must concede, that casualties among unarmed civilians have tended to rise in comparison with those among the armed forces in war itself. The populations of Japan and Germany, among others, can testify to this, for the Allies carried out a policy of deliberately trying to destroy the civilian rear.

More recently in both Korea and Indochina, the Pentagon has provided the world with fresh examples of the casualties deliberately inflicted on unarmed civilians.

In all probability, if the holocaust of a nuclear war is visited on humanity, the first—if not the last—casualties will be borne on a

colossal scale by unarmed civilians. What is the political conclusion to be drawn from this? That the longer capitalism continues to survive, the higher the cost becomes in terms of sheer physical survival. But this general conclusion does not tell us much about the relationship between guerrilla war and party building.

I am willing to concede that under the Nazi occupation life was safer in the camps of the armed partisans than among the unarmed sectors of the civilian population. But I would contend that this hardly alters the conclusions about guerrilla war drawn by Lenin and Trotsky long ago—that it should be regarded at best as an auxiliary form of struggle, and one that is not without its dangers to the resolution of the key problem of constructing a revolutionary socialist party.

We have not yet exhausted the question of engagement in guerrilla warfare as a means of physical survival. "Many more of the armed partisans in all the countries occupied by the Nazis survived than the Communist, Trotskyist, Socialist, and trade-union leaders who let themselves be deported to concentration camps," write Comrades Germain and Knoeller. I note the inclusion of Trotskyist leaders in this rather sweeping statement. We should not forget that in some countries the Trotskyists were liquidated by the Stalinists even under the Nazi occupation. This chain of thought leads us to something even more important.

The country where the greatest number of Trotskyist leaders "let themselves be deported to concentration camps" was the Soviet Union. There, as is well known, they perished; sometimes being placed in droves before the firing squads of the GPU. In the light of the conclusions they draw, must not Comrades Germain and Knoeller in all consistency maintain that the Trotskyists in the Soviet Union made a fundamental mistake in not turning to the use of guerrilla warfare against Stalin's murder machine? They would have had a better chance of physical survival, would they not?

These questions are not rhetorical. They arise quite logically out of the position taken by Comrades Germain and Knoeller, and they really should answer them, particularly since it can hardly be imagined that they have not thought of them.

If their answers are, yes, the Soviet Trotskyists would have been better advised to resort to guerrilla warfare and not let themselves be deported to concentration camps, then another question arises. Was not Trotsky wrong in refusing to appeal to the Red Army against Stalin and his clique when this was still possible? After all, the Red Army would surely have been able to

block Stalin, even if Stalin had resorted to guerrilla warfare. On the other hand, if we agree that Trotsky and the other oppositionist forces in the Soviet Union followed a correct course, then this must be regarded as a supreme example of the Bolshevik view that armed struggle must be subordinated to higher political considerations.

These considerations, of course, are quite material and palpable. They concern (a) the mood of the masses, and (b) the strength of the party, including the capacities of its leadership.

The leadership qualifications of the Trotskyist cadres in the Soviet Union were certainly strong enough. What was missing was the driving force of the masses. They had become demobilized, in this instance out of exhaustion. Moreover the Bolshevik Party had begun to disintegrate. The primary job facing Trotsky was to save the party or rebuild it. He had to begin with a faction struggle. By refusing to call on the Red Army, or to engage in guerrilla warfare, Trotsky was simply applying a basic postulate of Bolshevism—not to fall into the error of trying to substitute the action of small groups of cadres for what must be done by the masses themselves.

It would be excellent if Comrades Germain and Knoeller, or other comrades who went through it personally, would write more about the experiences under the Nazi occupation. In particular one wonders if the partisans, among others, ever discussed how they came to be entrapped in such a situation. Did they ever take up the role played by the Stalinists and the Social Democrats in failing to build revolutionary parties in Europe modeled on the one constructed by Lenin? Surely the Trotskyists—those that survived the bullets of both the Nazis and the Stalinists—raised the question.

In any case, for us today the appearance of guerrilla warfare in Europe in World War II must surely be taken in the context of the great debacle in Germany in 1933 that permitted Hitler to come to power virtually unopposed. The main lesson to be drawn from this was the absence of a combat party.

And since the question has been raised of the virtues of guerrilla warfare under the Nazi occupation, we are compelled, I would think, to follow this unusual development further and ask what finally came of it.

In the case of Yugoslavia, guerrilla warfare, as in the Soviet Union, played an important auxiliary role in the defeat of German imperialism and helped place Tito in a better position to later resist the pressure of the Kremlin. But in Western Europe

and in Greece? If the partisans could be said to have played an important role in preparing the conditions for a successful socialist revolution, they proved incapable of taking power except on a local scale. France, Italy, Greece, and with them various other countries, would most certainly have gone socialist in the aftermath of World War II had not the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties played a consciously counterrevolutionary role. What was needed for the partisans to play a contributing part in a socialist victory was a Leninist party. This did not exist in Europe at the end of World War II. The partisans disintegrated and permitted themselves to be disarmed.

It is important, it appears to me, for the Latin American revolutionists and the revolutionists in other parts of the world to know the overall context in which the guerrilla struggle in Europe under the Nazi occupation must be fitted for a correct, balanced appreciation of its meaning. Certain vital lessons, obviously applicable to the current scene, are well worth considering in detail.

3. *The experience in Vietnam must be placed in proper focus.* "Many more of the Vietnamese Communists who have been fighting arms in hand for *twenty-five years* have survived than of the Indonesian Communists who refused to engage in such a struggle," Comrades Germain and Knoeller tell us.

To me it appears inappropriate to engage in a comparative body count between the Vietnamese and Indonesian Communists. First of all, if the comparison is to be made over a period of twenty-five years, it should include the time when the Indonesian Communists *were* fighting arms in hand: (a) when they participated in the struggle against Dutch imperialism, which bears comparison with the struggle of the Vietnamese against French imperialism, and (b) when the Indonesian Communists, arms in hand, sought to overthrow the nationalist government in 1948.

The lessons to be drawn from the putschism of some of the leaders of the Indonesian Communist Party (including the officers who engaged in the 1965 attempt) should not be left out, one would think, in assessing the "strategy" of armed struggle.¹⁰⁸

Secondly, the total body count in Indochina over the past twenty-five years may be *higher* than the total body count in Indonesia over the same period. Such raw facts do not shed much light on the subject we are discussing.

Thirdly, the failure of the Indonesian Communist Party to prepare the masses for a showdown with the Sukarno govern-

ment and to lead them, arms in hand, toward the establishment of a workers' and peasants' government, which would have been relatively easy at a certain point, is explainable by the Stalinist background and education of the Indonesian CP leaders. The influence of Maoism was especially pernicious. Peking's foreign policy of supporting the national bourgeoisie in countries like Indonesia and Pakistan reinforced the fatal class-collaborationist line of the Aidit leadership.¹⁰⁹

In short, the catastrophe that befell Indonesian Communism and the Indonesian masses in 1965 is ascribable precisely to the absence of a combat party constructed on the Leninist model.

Like Comrades Germain and Knoeller, I admire the determination of the Vietnamese people to win their freedom. Their will to struggle has had worldwide repercussions, not least of all in the heartland of imperialism. The plain evidence of the depth and power of this determination ought to lead us all the more, it seems to me, to inquire into the reasons for the protracted nature of their struggle. Surely the policies followed by the leadership have had some bearing on this. In my opinion, three items stand out very prominently:

1. The liquidation of the Trotskyists, who were rather strong in Vietnam before World War II.¹¹⁰ This meant not only the elimination of capable revolutionary leaders but the repression of the Leninist tendency.

2. The welcome extended by Ho Chi Minh¹¹¹ to the Allied imperialist forces at the end of World War II. This enabled the French to become reestablished and facilitated the eventual involvement of U.S. imperialism.

3. The signing of the Geneva agreement after the victory at Dienbienphu in 1954.¹¹² The agreement, carving the country in half—presumably only temporarily—enabled the counterrevolutionary forces to recover in the South and gave U.S. imperialism priceless time in which to prepare to intervene on a massive scale.

To this must be added, as in the case of Indonesia, the role of Stalinism.

Of course, the existence of the Chinese workers' state on the border of Vietnam was a major source of inspiration to the Vietnamese people. They could hardly have maintained their long struggle without material aid from China (and from the Soviet Union); and the establishment of a workers' state in North Vietnam was one of the consequences of the victory of the Chinese revolution.

On another level, however, both Peking and Moscow have blocked the free development of the Vietnamese revolution. Prime responsibility for the welcome extended by the Vietnamese to the Allied imperialist armies at the end of World War II lies with Moscow. Both Moscow and Peking played major roles in putting across the Geneva agreement in 1954.

Finally, in the period since 1965, while they have supplied material aid, enabling the Vietnamese to carry on the struggle, it has been doled out with an eyedropper, and both Peking and Moscow have carefully refrained from doing anything in other areas to substantially relieve the pressure on war-besieged Vietnam. In their routine declarations of solidarity they have not so much as breathed a word about the need to open a "second front" in behalf of an ally—a workers' state—suffering an armed assault by the mightiest imperialist power on earth.

In fact, both Moscow and Peking, instead of considering themselves as likewise under attack—as they are—give the impression, each in its own way, of having assured both the Johnson and Nixon administrations that the Pentagon can proceed with its dirty work without need to fear much response from them so long as operations do not impinge too directly on their national bureaucratic interests.

The reactionary foreign policy followed by both Peking and Moscow with respect to the Vietnamese revolution has thus heavily influenced the course of that revolution by affecting the policies of the Ho Chi Minh team. The major guilt for the extended travail of the Vietnamese people lies with the Chinese and Soviet bureaucracies. In face of this, to hail the efficacy of twenty-five years of armed struggle in and of itself, signifies disregarding the politics that have guided (and misguided) that armed struggle.

Again we confront the same lesson as before—the preeminent importance of a Leninist-type party.

This is the true historical dilemma confronting the revolutionists, not only in many Latin American countries but in all the Latin American countries, and all other countries besides. As Trotsky put it in the opening sentence of the Transitional Program: "The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat."

Tactics and Strategy

At the end of my article "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America," I specified in four paragraphs what I considered to be the crucial point in the discussion on Latin America prior to the last world congress. In replying to Comrade Maitan above, I quoted all four paragraphs, so I will only refer to them here. The gist of the point is that correctly conceived, guerrilla war should be regarded merely as a specific form of armed struggle, a tactic entailed by political considerations.

Repeating this point in my article "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America," I explained: "What is primary in revolutionary strategy, the minority maintained, is building a combat party; resorting to guerrilla warfare should be regarded as a secondary tactical question."¹¹³

Unfortunately, Comrades Germain and Knoeller disregard this plain language and use the words "tactic" and "strategy" in a different way. While this greatly facilitates their argumentation, it hardly adds to the clarity of the discussion.

I do not dispute that ordinarily the words are used rather loosely, "tactics" and "strategy" even being spoken of as equivalents. Sometimes they are used in a more precise sense: "Strategy wins wars; tactics win battles." Still more precisely, they can have a dialectical relationship. In the sample sentence, the strategic goal is to win the peace; war is but a tactic to achieve this aim. Thus Trotsky can say: "There are a few things in this world besides military knowledge; there is communism and the world tasks that the working class sets itself; and there is war as one of the methods employed by the working class."¹¹⁴

Comrades Germain and Knoeller use the words tactics and strategy in accordance with a rigid meaning of their own, and on this basis try to make the position taken by the minority at the last world congress look ridiculous.

"... Comrade Joe Hansen . . . proclaims as an absolute dogma that guerrilla warfare is not a strategy but a tactic."¹¹⁵ "... if guerrilla warfare is a tactical question, how did it happen that for ten years the entire revolutionary vanguard in Latin America crystallized around debates and passionate struggles centering on the Cuban experience?"¹¹⁶ "The revolutionists who let themselves be hypnotized by the question of 'foquismo' and the purely tactical aspect of guerrilla warfare did not constitute all the revolutionary movement in Latin America but only a small

minority.”¹¹⁷ The “strategic alternative” is “which orientation to follow—one toward taking power through armed struggle; or a reformist one toward collaborating with the ‘national’ bourgeoisie and its army. . . .”¹¹⁸ “It is because this question is a strategical one and not a tactical one that the debate has been so impassioned. . . .”¹¹⁹ “But, unfortunately for Comrade Hansen, much more is at stake than a simple change of tactics.”¹²⁰

Leaving aside other phrases of the same kind, we come to their conclusion (made in connection with the orientation of the Cubans) supporting the “strategy” of armed struggle: “It is in this sense that our strategy of armed struggle in Latin America is an integral part of our defense of the Cuban Revolution.”¹²¹

To use the language indulged in by Comrades Germain and Knoeller, it is a “strange and significant” fact that not once in this section, which they entitle “The Influence of the Cuban Revolution on the Strategic Orientation of the Latin-American Revolutionists,” do they consider where to place party building from the standpoint of tactics and strategy. *Not once!*

Since the beginning of the Trotskyist movement, basing ourselves on the heritage of Leninism, we have considered our main strategic goal to be the creation of a mass revolutionary socialist party so as to ensure the victory of the revolution and the establishment of socialism. To create that party requires active participation in the class struggle, and this poses an incalculable variety of tactical problems. These nonetheless can be placed in various broad categories as was done in the Transitional Program. I repeat, it is a strange and significant fact that Comrades Germain and Knoeller do not once refer to this in their lengthy section on tactics and strategy—which nevertheless presumes to be an answer on this very point.

Their avoidance of the subject is all the more cause for wonder in view of the fact that at least some Latin American revolutionists have considered the question. I cited four examples above: Héctor Béjar, Ciro Bustos, Ladislav Dowbor, and the Tupamaros. (The positions of the urban guerrillas in the United States and Canada should also be borne in mind.)

Héctor Béjar is completely dubious about the role of the party in relation to armed struggle. Dowbor considers the question settled. In his view the “strategy” of armed struggle “solves the Leninist problem of how to remain in the vanguard, ahead of the masses.” The Tupamaros likewise believe that they have found a shortcut. Ciro Bustos is equally convinced that something much.

better and much more attractive than party building has been discovered. He holds that the change introduced by the Cubans was "to carry guerrilla warfare from the level of tactics to strategy."

These revolutionists certainly find no difficulty in understanding the issue, even if they have not read any of the documents in our internal discussion. And they have the additional merit of coming directly to the point.

It would seem obvious that it is wrong of them to dismiss Lenin as superseded. It would seem just as obvious that it is one of our primary tasks to counterpose to their position our own position; that is, what Lenin and Trotsky taught on how to win a revolution through the *strategy* of building a combat party capable of employing the transitional *method* of working out tactics in all areas of the class struggle, including armed confrontations.

It is regrettable that Comrades Germain and Knoeller are not inclined to join in doing this but lean, instead, in the opposite direction.

The Drift Toward Abstractness

If we look back over the development of the polemic, one of the features that draws attention is the drift of the majority toward abstractness in explaining their reasons for orienting toward guerrilla war.

The discussion began with the draft resolution on Latin America, submitted by the majority, which projected rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period on a continental scale, and with Comrade Maitan's thesis on the need to get practical, throw everything into a bid for an immediate breakthrough, and to attempt this in a predetermined geographical area—at that time it was Bolivia.

These formulations, if not the concepts behind them, were modified so that the final resolution passed by the world congress at least nodded in the direction of the opposition to the new line. According to Comrades Germain and Knoeller, "... an objective reading, without preconceptions, of the Ninth Congress document makes it possible to conclude that it by no means advocates 'a strategy of rural guerrilla warfare' . . . but the strategy of armed struggle, which is an entirely different thing."¹²²

They continue in the next sentence:

To try to give the opposite impression, Comrade Hansen has been forced to single out *a single sentence* in the document adopted by the Ninth World Congress and polemicize against it instead of analyzing the document as a whole and polemicizing against its general line. The least that can be said is that this is not a very fruitful method of argument and will not advance the movement.¹²³

But I was not the first to single out the passage (it includes more than a single sentence). Comrade Maitan singled it out for inclusion in a public article, "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America." Here is precisely how he quoted it:

The fundamental perspective, the only realistic perspective for Latin America is that of an armed struggle which may last for long years. . . . Even in the case of countries where large mobilizations and class conflicts in the cities may occur first, civil war will take manifold forms of armed struggle, in which the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare, the term having primarily a geographical-military meaning and not necessarily implying an exclusively peasant composition of the fighting detachments (or even necessarily preponderantly peasant composition). In this sense, armed struggle in Latin America means fundamentally guerrilla warfare.¹²⁴

Comrade Maitan did not cite this in *Quatrième Internationale* (June 1970) and *Intercontinental Press* in order to publicly disavow it.¹²⁵ Nothing that he has written since, either publicly or in the internal discussion in the world Trotskyist movement, would indicate that he has changed his mind.

Trying to get away from the projection of rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period on a continental scale, and to give the impression that it hardly exists in the final draft of the resolution passed by the last world congress—Comrade Maitan's public stand to the contrary—Comrades Germain and Knoeller substitute the phrase "strategy of armed struggle," which is "an entirely different thing" from "a strategy of rural guerrilla warfare."

Strategy of armed struggle . . . This formulation is really winged, particularly if not too much attention is paid to the word "strategy." It lifts us to a high level of abstraction where the specific origin of the differences becomes lost to sight.

Latin American itself is left far behind, and we range across continents and over decades of time, guided only by our dependable compass, "armed struggle," picking up quotations, citations,

and references. All of these have something in common; namely, armed struggle. And, of course, all of them are applicable to Latin America and to the current discussion, which is one of the advantages of employing a common denominator.

For example, Comrades Germain and Knoeller quote a paragraph from Lenin's September 30, 1906, article "Guerrilla Warfare." Then they assert: "This quotation admirably expresses the problem confronting our movement with regard to guerrilla warfare and armed struggle in Latin America. It ought to convince Comrade Hansen that he is on the wrong road and is leading us to an impasse by his polemic."¹²⁶

The quotation from Lenin coupled with the admonition from Comrades Germain and Knoeller convince me that there were guerrillas in Russia in 1906 and guerrillas in Latin America in 1970 when they wrote their article. They convince me, too, that Lenin faced a party-building problem at that time and that we face one today.

What else am I supposed to be convinced of? That the revolution in Russia was on the ebb in 1906 and that Lenin misjudged this, and that similarly in Latin America today the revolution is on the ebb and our comrades are misjudging it? Or that Lenin would have been right had the revolution been on the rise in 1906 so that his words then are applicable now in Latin America, whereas we must disregard Trotsky's conclusions concerning the correct placement of guerrilla war in a period of rise?

Or am I supposed to be convinced that just as some of the guerrillas in Latin America today have developed a new "strategy," so Lenin in 1906 developed a new strategy of guerrilla warfare superseding his previous views on the strategy of building a combat party?

Am I supposed to be convinced that our comrades should begin an active boycott of all elections in Latin America today, but a year from now run for parliament if the parliament measures up to the standards set by the tsar in 1907?

Am I, perhaps, supposed to be convinced that Trotsky was dead wrong in his estimate of Lenin's experience with guerrilla warfare and that he led our movement into an impasse by what he wrote on this in his biography of Stalin?

The same abstractness characterizes all the other examples collected by Comrades Germain and Knoeller, examples going back to the Paris Commune, not forgetting the 1927 Canton putsch, the 1934 Asturias insurrection, and the Chinese guerrilla struggle after 1928.

It is true that these, and a number of other examples, are neatly filed in four pigeonholes called "The Historical Variants of Armed Struggle." Is there a dialectical progression among these categories? Do they constitute nodal points indicating how from small beginnings, minor struggles can escalate into confrontations that logically (whatever the historical sequence) lead to a decisive showdown over who shall wield state power? Do they follow the pattern of movement indicated in the Transitional Program? The answer is no to all of these questions. The classification is neither historical nor dialectical; it is lifeless. Such an abstract classification is useless so far as party-building tasks are concerned, whether in Latin America or anywhere else.

To enable us to draw instructive lessons each of the examples would have to be studied in a detailed way in the concrete situation of the given movement at the given stage of its development, precisely as Lenin advised. Moreover, to relate these lessons in a meaningful way to the problems we face, we would have to bear in mind in a detailed way the concrete situation in which our movement finds itself, including a similarly detailed concrete appreciation of the stage of its own development. In place of analysis of that kind, Comrades Germain and Knoeller abstract "armed struggle" from everything else and arrange the samples like dried flowers. The procedure and the results are hardly surprising. They result from substituting "armed struggle" for party building as the central axis of our movement.

The "Variants" of Armed Struggle

The insistence upon armed struggle being a *strategy* serves other useful purposes besides enabling Comrades Germain and Knoeller to elbow aside the question of the relationship between armed struggle and the strategy of party building. Above all, it permits them to elevate into the first plane the "variants" of armed struggle.

The purpose of this exercise in classification is to corner those who are of the opinion that armed struggle is a tactical question and make them say yes or no to each of the "variants," particularly the variant of guerrilla warfare.

If you hold that engagement in armed struggle is a tactical question to be decided by a revolutionary party in the light of its own strength and the possibilities or necessities of the situation it

faces, the schema drawn up by Comrades Germain and Knoeller is of little interest. In tactics everything hinges on the judgment of the leadership, for the simple reason that no compilation can anticipate the precise configuration of the reality to which the party must respond. In fact, it is a mistake to attempt to work out tactics in advance.

First of all, the selected premises automatically carry their own answer. To judge how barren this procedure is, you can start with the answers and decide what premises are required to make them applicable; then wait for those precise premises to appear in reality.

Secondly, to decide on a set of tactical variants in advance induces expectation that those variants will appear; one's eyes become set in a certain direction and corresponding anticipatory decisions are made. All this increases the chances of missing what actually occurs and what is really required until the opportune moment has passed.

Of course, Comrades Germain and Knoeller have listed their "variants" not so much in anticipation of future contingencies as to justify the stand taken by the last world congress and to help impel the Fourth International as a whole further along the course of regarding guerrilla warfare no longer as an auxiliary form of struggle but as a strategic orientation. The substance of the question is not changed, but the differences are made more acute since they involve the immediate attitude and orientation of our movement in areas going far beyond Latin America, as I tried to show earlier.

Armed Struggle Properly Classified

Let us resign ourselves to following the argumentation by Comrades Germain and Knoeller on "classical" and presumably "nonclassical" armed struggle.¹²⁷

1. "Classical." The mass movement after a long period of accumulating strength and experience, undergoes rapid expansion, goes over into arming the proletariat and confronts the bourgeois army at the moment of fullest flowering of the revolutionary crisis.

This includes two subvariants, they say. In one subvariant (for purposes of identification I will label it *a*), the armed confrontation occurs at the "culmination" of revolutionary crisis (Russia in 1917; Germany 1918-19). In the other subvariant (let us call it *b*),

the bourgeois army remains substantially intact and is able to precipitate a showdown at the "outset" of the revolutionary crisis (Spain in 1936; Vietnam in 1945-46).¹²⁸

2. "Ultraleft." A revolutionary party, already strong but still in the minority, "provokes a premature confrontation between its forces, in isolation, and the enemy army" (Canton putsch of 1927; 1921 "March Action" in Germany).¹²⁹

3. A "variant intermediate between the first and second." (Shouldn't it be listed as 1½?) This is an armed confrontation with the enemy resulting from the advance and maturing of the mass struggle before the revolutionary party has won sufficient national influence to be able to defeat the bourgeois state (Paris Commune in 1871; Russia in 1905).¹³⁰

4. Autonomous armed detachments of the mass movement launch a struggle for any one of various reasons. This is the grab-bag category that takes care of all cases not listed under number one, number two, or number three. Includes guerrilla warfare.

"Why this classification?" ask Comrades Germain and Knoeller. "Because it enables us to narrow the debate."

Truth to tell, it is hard to see any other justification for it.

Now comes the squeeze play. "We will not insult Comrade Hansen by claiming that he is opposed to the first category of armed struggle."¹³¹

So that's taken care of; both the majority and minority presumably agree on category number one.

Similarly on category number two. Both the majority and the minority agree on being opposed to putsches.

By the process of elimination, the "debate is thus focused on the problems of the third and fourth category of armed struggle."¹³² But "there is no Chinese wall between armed struggles of category number 1 and categories number 3 and number 4."¹³³

In category number one, the most likely perspective, "save for exceptional cases," is the important subvariant *b*, where the bourgeois army remains intact and is able to precipitate a showdown at the outset of the revolutionary crisis. This grades into categories number three and number four, so that if you are for category number one that makes you for the important subvariant *b*, and in all consistency you should be for categories number three and number four.

Now, according to Comrades Germain and Knoeller, they *do* grade into each other. This is because of the uneven development of the revolutionary process. The bourgeois army remains largely intact because it is based on the most backward sectors of the

population, the last to be set in motion. The different sectors of the masses achieve revolutionary consciousness unevenly, so that the most advanced are almost certain to initiate revolutionary action before the heavy battalions are ready for action.

Still according to Comrades Germain and Knoeller, "If the party tries to eliminate this unevenness by deliberately curbing the enthusiasm of the most revolutionary strata it risks producing the opposite result." The advanced strata can become demoralized; even worse "the *essential* element for convincing or neutralizing the hesitant strata may disappear, this element being less the *propaganda* of the party or the soviets than the resolute *action* of the proletariat."¹³⁴

You must therefore favor category number three, which includes the Paris Commune.

(While we are on this point, let us note that the Bolsheviks did attempt to restrain the enthusiasm of the most revolutionary strata in St. Petersburg in the latter part of June 1917 precisely in order to give the less advanced areas an opportunity to catch up. The Vyborg Bolsheviks complained with embarrassment to their friends, according to Trotsky: "We have to play the part of the firehose."¹³⁵ Trotsky's analysis of this phase of the revolution is highly pertinent to the current polemic. See in particular chapter 3 of volume 2 of the *History*, "Could the Bolsheviks Have Seized the Power in July?" in which Trotsky places the March 1921 action in Germany under the same category as the "July Days" in Russia in distinction from the placement given it by Comrades Germain and Knoeller under category number two.¹³⁶

Finally—to continue with Comrades Germain and Knoeller's polemic—"While we are resolute opponents of any isolated action *incomprehensible* to the masses; we are by no means advocates solely of armed actions *organized by the masses themselves* within the framework of their organizations." For example, "In the struggle against rising fascism, exemplary actions by autonomous armed detachments may be useful and indispensable to convince the masses that such a struggle is possible—before the masses themselves enter into it."¹³⁷

You must therefore favor category number four, which includes guerrilla warfare.

I, too, am interested in narrowing the debate. Let me try to work through these categories, proceeding for the sake of convenience from the point we have reached and working back.

Category number four is a varied assortment. A good instance, showing the variety, is the reference to forming "autonomous

armed detachments" in the struggle against fascism. Woe betide such formations if they go into action by themselves rather than as cadres immersed in the task of mobilizing the masses! The danger is adventurism, putschism. No Chinese wall separates category number four from category number two. As proof note the appearance of urban guerrilla fighters in such countries as Canada and the United States, or, if you prefer, the many *foquista* experiments in Latin America.

Thus, if you are against category number two, that is, against adventurism and putschism, as Comrades Germain and Knoeller are, you should be extremely wary of category number four, which includes guerrilla warfare.

That ought to settle that point. The method used by Comrades Germain and Knoeller—if followed in the right direction—yields results diametrically opposed to theirs.

In the wreckage of their argumentation, a few items are worth jotting down for the record. Note, for instance, how the example they cited of "exemplary actions by autonomous armed detachments" suggests an approach to the struggle against fascism that differs from Trotsky's, as presented in the Transitional Program. Trotsky emphasized the mobilization of the masses by the tens of millions, starting in the plants with the formation of pickets and ending in the streets with massive confrontations—all under the slogans of self-defense. (Compare to this Trotsky's logical outline of the process, which I quoted earlier.)

On category number three I am of the opinion that in instances where the mass struggle reaches the point of explosion before a revolutionary party has been constructed, whatever revolutionists there are have no choice but to go with their class. A defeat is not inevitable, as Comrades Germain and Knoeller admit. Besides the Paris Commune and the December 1905 insurrection in Russia (and let us add the Santo Domingo uprising of 1965), we should recall the partial victory in Bolivia in 1952.¹³⁸ In fact, the coming period may give us some new and surprising examples to place in category number three. All the more reason for us to concentrate on the crucial work of forming cadres.

As for category number one, which Comrades Germain and Knoeller have named the "classical" variant with an "extremely important" subvariant, this appears to me to be an abstract and arbitrary classification.

First of all, even under the worst dictatorships, and not just "within an essentially bourgeois-democratic framework,"¹³⁹ the masses gain experience and build up strength in a molecular

way. This process has been very clear in fascist Spain. The masses can move into the arena with unforeseen explosive violence, as in the case of Santo Domingo in 1965. Had it not been for the U.S. military invasion, the mass movement in Santo Domingo would in all likelihood have smashed the bourgeois army as did the Bolivian masses in 1952. The masses in Santo Domingo armed themselves in a period of days and won over important sectors of the army.

Similar molecular processes with highly explosive potentials are going on throughout the world, including the advanced capitalist centers, where bourgeois democracy is not exactly in full flower. One of the main problems confronting the sections of the Fourth International is to become integrated into this molecular process through the formation of cadres rooted in the masses.

Secondly, it is rather misleading to place the Russian revolution in category number one, subvariant *a*, without clearly specifying that tsarism must be classified more with the oligarchical, military, gorilla, and fascist dictatorships of our times than with bourgeois democracy. Perhaps it would be helpful to divide subvariant *a* into subclassifications *i*, *ii*, *iii*, *iv*, etc., according to the type of regime the revolutionists must deal with. It would also be helpful to provide for the dynamism that is reflected in the shifts made by the ruling class from one regime to another.

The Bolsheviks had to construct their party largely in the underground, with their key leaders most often in exile, whether in Siberia or abroad, and with their own forces at times reduced to very small numbers. In view of this, the vigorous opposition of the Bolsheviks to terroristic methods, their insistence on the primacy of party building and of linking up with the masses, are all the more instructive.

If Comrades Germain and Knoeller were consistent, they would eliminate category number three by changing it to number $1\frac{1}{2}$, or, still better, to subvariant *c* of number one, and get rid of category number four by including guerrilla warfare as subvariant *d* of category number one, where—with removal of the fractional number $1\frac{1}{2}$ —it would be easier to remove any Chinese walls and grade it into category number two which everyone is against.

For good measure, consider the following: Guerrillas appeared at certain phases of both the first (1905-07) and second (1917-20) revolutions in Russia. That was how Lenin and Trotsky came to consider the phenomenon, wasn't it?

If we view both revolutions as following the classical pattern—

the proletariat, backed by the peasantry, rising in a mighty upsurge and the revolutionists staking everything on connecting up with the masses by means of a combat party—then we must surely say that phases of guerrilla struggle are included in the classical pattern; i.e., what Comrades Germain and Knoeller call category number one. We can all the better appreciate Lenin's interest in guerrilla war in 1906. Likewise, the consistency of the minority view in accepting it on the tactical level but rejecting it as a strategy. In addition, we see that to place guerrilla warfare *exclusively* in a special category is as arbitrary as the rest of the classification proposed by Comrades Germain and Knoeller.

The most striking feature of their classification is the failure to provide for the role of revolutionary leadership; i.e., the presence or absence of a combat party. Thus they merge together in category number one, subvariant *a*, both the Russian revolution of 1917, which succeeded because of the role played by the Bolsheviks, and the German revolution of 1918-19, which failed because of the absence of a Bolshevik-type party and because of the betrayal committed by the Social Democracy.

In category number three (1½), they place both the Paris Commune of 1871, which failed because of the absence of a party, owing to the inexperience of the revolutionary leadership, and the 1905 revolution in Russia, which was defeated because the party-building process was still only in its initial stage. These are important distinctions.

The classification made by Comrades Germain and Knoeller was bound to be arbitrary because it was drawn up not as an accurate reflection of the real world but as a debating device, from the narrow standpoint of the "strategy" of armed struggle, with the role of the party left out, since that is a pivotal point belonging to the minority.

The Bolshevik Strategy

As an additional item, let me call attention to a historical reference made by Comrades Germain and Knoeller which I hope they will correct at the first opportunity.

"Why were the Bolsheviks," they ask, "able to avoid (and were a thousand times right to do so) a full and deliberate armed confrontation with the bourgeois army at the time of the February Revolution?" They are referring to the *outset* of the revolution, which is an "extremely important distinction" in their set of categories, and they contrast the situation in Russia with those

in Germany and Spain. "Was it owing exclusively or principally to the presence of the Bolshevik party in Russia and its absence in Germany and Spain?"¹⁴⁰

Their answer is as follows: "Frankly, we do not think so. We think so still less because in February and March 1917 the Bolshevik party was not the party of Lenin or of Lenin and Trotsky but the party of Stalin-Kamenev-Molotov, with a policy not fundamentally different from that of the German Independents in November-December 1918 to January 1919."¹⁴¹

They hold the true explanation to be that the Russian army had become so broken up by an external factor prior to the revolution—World War I—that it had virtually ceased to be an "adequate counterrevolutionary instrument."

Comrades Germain and Knoeller are trying something new—viewing the course of the Russian revolution from the standpoint of the "strategy of armed struggle." From this standpoint it must be granted that it is odd that the Bolsheviks did not begin with at least "a minimum of practical application" of "armed confrontations," if only for the purpose of providing "exemplary actions." And, frankly, I would think all the more so if the army had virtually ceased to be an adequate counterrevolutionary instrument.

The reasons why the Bolsheviks did not take that course can be stated succinctly.

1. While Lenin had succeeded in building the cadre of a revolutionary party, the process was not yet completed. He had to finish the task in the very course of the revolution. The principal requirement was a "regroupment"—to bring in Leon Trotsky and the forces associated with him.

2. The party had to be rearmed. Lenin himself was responsible for a good part of the disorientation displayed by the Bolsheviks in February and March 1917. He had insisted on the formula "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" as against Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution. Not until the Bolshevik Party had the correct theory could it go forward. Lenin, as we know, made the correction in his Theses of April 4. At first he was in a minority of virtually one—himself, and he was accused of having become a "Trotskyist." Because of his great prestige and political capacities he was able before long to change this minority into a majority and the Bolsheviks could then move forward. The task of building a revolutionary cadre had been completed.¹⁴²

3. The party had to become a mass party in a political struggle

against all competing parties and tendencies, particularly in the proletariat. This took additional time.

4. While organizing for the showdown, the proletariat had to learn to trust the political judgment of the Bolsheviks. The first sharp lesson was the necessity to restrain themselves from a premature bid for power, or from provocative actions that would play into the hands of the bourgeois state. What the most advanced section of the proletariat had to wait for was the rest of the masses to catch up.

5. The key forces of the peasantry, assembled in the conscript army, had to be won over to the slogans of Bolshevism; that is, brought—arms and all—under the leadership of the proletariat, which was in turn guided by the Bolshevik cadres.

6. The Bolsheviks had to be completely sure that a solid majority of the populace had grasped the central demands formulated by the party and was ready to battle all the opposing forces to realize them.

These six considerations are sufficient to indicate that the axis followed by the Bolsheviks was to build the cadre of a revolutionary party, to expand it into a mass party, and to win a majority. The military side—the armed struggle—conformed *tactically* to the party-building strategy.

What the Russian victory demonstrated for the first time in history was the role that a proletarian party, armed with the program and insights of Leninism, can accomplish in a revolutionary situation, whatever the particular conditions may be.

Can this role be repeated? Yes, it can. The Fourth International was founded on this proposition.

That is why Trotsky, in analyzing the defeats in Germany and Spain, emphasized the absence of parties built on the Bolshevik model and not such differences between the revolutionary situation in Russia and subsequent ones in other countries as the degree of disintegration of the armed forces *before* the revolutionary upsurge of the masses.

The Feedback from Practice to Theory

Practice is dialectically related to theory, as all of us know. The “orientation and method” of guerrilla warfare, adopted at the last world congress in hope of establishing the Fourth International in the field of practice, stands in contradiction to the theoretical heritage of our movement. Thus an inevitable feedback from practice was soon registered in the field of theory.

The disdain for theory exhibited by the Cubans found its parallel in the permissive attitude adopted by the architects of the majority line toward the ultraleft posture to be seen in certain sectors of our movement. The two most striking current examples of this posture are the combination of sectarianism and verbal redness displayed by the majority leadership of the IMG in Britain, and the Maoist, Marighellist, and Tupamarist deviations of what was the *El Combatiente* grouping at the last world congress.

The contradiction between the theoretical heritage of our movement and the practice of the new "strategy" is shown in other ways. The new practice calls for its own reflection in theory if for no other reason than to explain and justify it.

The defenders of the new "orientation and method" have sought to justify their line by appealing to the authorities of the past. Hence the diligent research work, going back as far as Engels. Hence, also, the peculiar selection of quotations and references, the tearing out of context, and the avoidance of references that speak against their position. Hence, to cap everything, the strange and significant fact that neither Comrade Maitan nor Comrades Germain and Knoeller cared to bring into consideration Trotsky's final judgment on guerrilla warfare.

The contradiction will deepen if those responsible persist in their course.

On the one hand it will lead to even worse repercussions than those already visible in our ranks, inasmuch as the permissiveness of the majority toward ultraleft errors encourages a more demanding attitude on the part of those committing them. Why should they have to put up with the "softness" of the majority leaders of the Fourth International toward carping criticisms of what they are doing in an honest effort to carry out the line of the last world congress?

On the other hand, the need to offer theoretical justification for the new course cannot help but bend its sponsors in the direction of the more consistent practitioners of the "orientation and method" of guerrilla warfare, who consider Leninism to have been superseded.

These internal and external pressures, working in combination, will tend to induce more vigorous efforts at justifying the new line—inevitably at the expense of the "old" theory, the "old" program, and the "old" cadres.

Four Answers to Four Questions

"So that the discussion can make real progress and not harden into a dialogue of the deaf," say Comrades Germain and Knoeller, "we would like to pose four questions to Comrade Hansen."¹⁴³

It is to be hoped that the discussion does not harden into a dialogue of the deaf. Any joint effort that might help prevent this can certainly count on my cooperation. Consequently I gladly pose four answers.

Question: "1. Does he believe that, as a general rule (with only a few minor exceptions) in the stage immediately ahead of us in Latin America it is improbable if not impossible that we will see a peaceful advance of the mass movement, broadening out in successive waves within an essentially bourgeois-democratic framework?"

Answer: I think that the general stand taken by our movement long before 1969 on the erosion and disappearance of bourgeois democracy—and not only in Latin America!—still remains valid. Out of the many items that could be cited, the following sentences from the Transitional Program, written in 1938, will indicate what I mean:

The bourgeoisie is nowhere satisfied with the official police and army. In the United States, even during "peaceful" times, the bourgeoisie maintains militarized battalions of scabs and privately armed thugs in factories. To this must now be added the various groups of American Nazis. The French bourgeoisie at the first approach of danger mobilized semilegal and illegal fascist detachments, including such as are in the army. No sooner does the pressure of the English workers once again become stronger, than immediately the fascist bands are doubled, trebled, increased tenfold to come out in bloody march against the workers. The bourgeoisie keeps itself most accurately informed about the fact that in the present epoch the class struggle irresistibly tends to transform itself into civil war.¹⁴⁴

Question: "2. Does he believe that, as a general rule, it is improbable that the breakup of the reactionary bourgeois armies in Latin America will proceed at the same rate as the rise of the mass movement, and that therefore these armies will lose their capacity for carrying out a bloody repression of the movement?"

Answer: Unfortunately, I am not good at reading tea leaves. A

powerful upsurge of the mass movement—in Latin America as elsewhere—will find a dialectical reflection within the armed forces. The bourgeois armies will tend to become weakened, corroded, or paralyzed, even torn with internal contradictions. Some anticipations of this were recently visible in Bolivia, for instance.

The rate at which this will occur will be determined by a whole series of factors, not least of which is the existence of a competent revolutionary leadership rooted in the masses. Only the course of the struggle itself can provide us with a meaningful answer as to the *rate*.

Again, the Transitional Program outlines a *method* for anticipating successive situations in this field and for working out effective responses in good time as the complex, dynamic process actually develops in life.

Question: “3. Does he think, on the basis of the two preceding considerations, that it is the duty of the Latin-American revolutionists to carry out a propaganda campaign to prepare the masses, and above all the vanguard, for the military confrontations inevitable in the near and relatively near future in most of the Latin-American countries? Does he think that the revolutionary strategy on whose basis the sections of the Fourth International are built must include a clear, unmistakable answer to this question, which in any case is being discussed by the entire vanguard?”

Answer: That was hardly fair. You smuggled in an extra question. However, let it pass.

As I hope I have made clear previously, I think the discussion involves much more than Latin America; and I must say that it is particularly obscure why you confine this question only to that continent.

I will repeat that the answer is really quite old. Long before 1969, it was included in the basic documents of our movement. The following sentences in the Transitional Program will serve, I hope, to refresh everyone’s mind:

The strategic task of the next period—a prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda, and organization—consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation, the inexperience of the younger generation). It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the

socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of *transitional demands*, stemming from today's conditions and today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat.¹⁴⁵

Please note: "the *strategic* task." Also note that Trotsky mentioned the immaturity of the *vanguard*, owing in part to "the inexperience of the younger generation."

Question: "4. Does he think that once our own organizations have accumulated a minimum of forces they must, in their turn, prepare for these confrontations or risk very heavy losses, both in physical terms (inflicted by the class enemy) and political terms (inflicted by the other tendencies in the revolutionary movement)?"

Answer: I suspect that this is a loaded question in which the authors have in mind a "minimum of forces" for involvement in the "strategy" of armed struggle or guerrilla warfare.

Taking the question at face value, however, I will say the following: In general, the primary problem *right now* is to increase *our own forces* so that we can wield greater weight in the political arena, whatever the type of confrontation we are faced with and whatever its source, whether this be the class enemy or opponents challenging us for leadership of the vanguard. Party building is the shortest route to solving these problems at the least overhead cost both physically and politically.

* * *

Now that I have answered these questions and thus helped save the discussion from becoming a dialogue of the deaf, I should like to ask Comrades Germain and Knoeller just one question:

1. What did the four questions above have to do with the real reasons for the decision of the majority at the last world congress to make a "turn" and head toward the "strategy" of guerrilla warfare as opposed to the strategy outlined in the Transitional Program?

But You've Got No Alternative Line

Comrade Maitan should perhaps be heard at this point: "The minority comrades do not have an alternative line that we could

analyze and reject." Comrade Maitan may not have analyzed the minority line, but he certainly rejected it.

He explains as follows:

At the world congress, the minority asked the delegates to reject the fundamental line of the document and proposed opening a discussion. Fourteen months later Comrade Hansen has renewed the argument, but the result is no different. The line of the majority is subjected to criticism but there is no proposal for replacing it. It is good to recall the criteria of the transitional program, warn against dangers, stress the essential role of mass work and the necessity of a revolutionary party. But Latin America is experiencing a situation of profound crisis in which, in a number of countries, the class struggle has already gone over into armed combat. We have proposed a strategy for this stage based on the experience of our sections and taking account of the experiences and conclusions of other revolutionary currents which have already participated in the struggle. What does the minority propose? What is its conception of armed struggle for a continent at a stage when, I repeat again, armed struggle is on the order of the day. How does it think that the struggle for the overthrow of imperialism and national capitalism can take place concretely?¹⁴⁶

I don't know the purpose of Comrade Maitan's reference to "fourteen months later." He knows very well that at the last world congress the majority rejected the proposal to continue the discussion. The needs of "security" were cited and the right of the majority to have a certain amount of time to test out their new line. I accepted the majority decision although I thought the decision was a mistake, since to continue the discussion did not involve a security question and could have helped lead to earlier clarification of the differences. Thus it was hardly my fault that a considerable delay occurred before the discussion could be renewed. It is a small matter, one indicative nevertheless of a certain attitude.

As to the challenge to develop a counterproposal, this is indeed disarming. What is our "conception of armed struggle for a continent"?

1. This presumes acceptance of the basic position of the majority—adoption of the "strategy" of armed struggle, which Comrade Maitan (if not Comrades Germain and Knoeller) equates in Latin America with guerrilla warfare in the main, and, in the final analysis, predominantly rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period and on a continental scale. The challenge thus

amounts to a demand that we present an alternative strategy of armed struggle or remain silent.

But the basic concept advanced by the majority is to be rejected as fallacious, since engagement in armed struggle is a tactical question when it is considered in relation to the party-building strategy. To write tactical recipes, even under the pompous title of "Counterproposals," would be a mistake, as I have already tried to explain.

2. It would be just as much a mistake, in my opinion, to attempt—in opposition to the new strategy adopted by the majority—to spell out the counterstrategy, offering it under some imposing title like "57 Varieties of Party Building" with numerous quotations from Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, V. I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and James P. Cannon,¹⁴⁷ and abundant examples selected from six continents over the past seventy years.

It would be an error to attempt something like that even if half the document were to deal with the special problems that appear when the class struggle becomes so sharp as to flare into violent confrontations, whether at the outset or at the culmination of an upsurge placing government power at stake.

3. By demanding that we advance an "alternative line," the comrades of the majority shirk their own duty. Theirs is the responsibility of explaining and justifying their decision to overturn the line followed up to 1969 and to replace it with a new alternative line called by them the "strategy of armed struggle."

What was wrong with the former line? What was "missing" in it? Why did it suddenly turn out to be inadequate or superseded? And precisely why at such a late date as 1969?

The comrades of the majority have as yet not answered these crucial questions. All they have given us is hints and innuendos. An example is the following by Comrade Maitan:

We are not unaware of the fact that in a context like that of Latin America today adventurist deviations can always occur, above and beyond more or less correct formulations in documents—we have to keep our eyes open to this danger and fight it without hesitation, if necessary. But above all at the time when we began to spell out our present conceptions on Latin America, that is, in the second half of 1967, the emphasis had to be put on the opposite danger. Despite its being founded by a leader of the October Revolution, the founder of the Red Army, and a man with an extraordinary list of honors for his participation in revolutionary struggles throughout the world, our movement might have given the impression of either being ignorant of the problems of armed struggle, or viewing them in a purely theoretical or propagandistic way to

such an extent that even in our own ranks there were comrades wanting to study military problems who drew on other sources, unaware of Leon Trotsky's contribution. This deficiency must be accounted for by the conditions in which we struggled for decades and by a legitimate concern not to encourage a suicidal adventurism, not to impose overwhelming tasks on very small nuclei. But, with the objective situation on our side, it was vitally necessary to make a turn. The world congress document was a contribution in this direction; the documents and decisions of the Bolivian and Argentinian comrades, at bottom, have had the same significance, with the advantage of adding more concreteness to the overall conceptions.¹⁴⁸

From this it would seem clear that in the second half of 1967—following the OLAS conference—one or more leaders of the Fourth International came to the conclusion that however justified the previous line had been in its time, it had become “vitally necessary to make a turn” of far-reaching scope.

It was necessary to find ways and means of altering the impression among guerrilla fighters that our movement was “ignorant of the problems of armed struggle” or viewed them “in a purely theoretical or propagandistic way.”

Thus another irony was added to history—leaders of the Fourth International pondering over what might be “missing” in the line and activities of the world Trotskyist movement and deciding it was guerrilla warfare, precisely as some of the guerrilla fighters, pondering over what was clearly missing in the strategy of guerrilla warfare, became inclined to think it might be a revolutionary party.

We are given another hint in the previously cited document by Comrade Maitan, “An Insufficient Document,” where we are told that we can't surmount our present difficulties until we can demonstrate “in practice” our capacity to make a “break-through,” specifically by engaging in guerrilla warfare at a predetermined spot on a map of the globe.

The reality thus appears to be that one or more of the leading comrades of the Fourth International became dissatisfied sometime in 1967 or earlier with the party-building strategy laid down at the founding congress of our movement. Something was “missing.” Good as our movement had proved itself to be in the field of theory it had not shown itself capable anywhere of making a comparable demonstration in practice, particularly a demonstration of know-how in acting “arms in hand.” Now the objective situation had changed. The field of guerrilla warfare had opened up. It was objectively possible for even a small group

to set up a front in the example set by the Cubans, provided everything else was subordinated to this "orientation and method."

That was the real rationale, it would seem from the evidence, behind the decision at the last world congress to elevate guerrilla warfare into a strategy and, with extravagant hopes, to plunge ahead in Bolivia and Argentina.

Instead of enlarging on these reasons and explaining them more fully—and perhaps convincing us—Comrade Maitan and Comrades Germain and Knoeller furnish us with a plethora of general *arguments* that have nothing to do with the alleged incapacity of our movement to prove itself practically, nothing to do with the alleged hindrance offered by the previous line, and nothing to do with the alleged imperious need for a breakthrough. In the absence of an explanation of these views, the demand that the minority provide an "alternative line" sounds like mockery.

4. While demanding that we offer a set of concrete counterproposals, the comrades of the majority do not themselves spell out concretely how their new line either opens a road to the masses or contributes to party building, although they admit that these are key questions facing our movement.

The comrades of the majority should tell us specifically how the engagement of a small group in guerrilla warfare as an "orientation and a method" solves the problem of mobilizing the masses in a struggle for power. They should tell us specifically how this "strategy" assures building a revolutionary socialist party. Some specific examples would be welcome to illustrate the power and efficacy of guerrilla warfare in these two respects.

The truth is that examples abound in Latin America, as well as other areas, including examples from the experience of our own movement, pointing to just the opposite conclusions from those drawn by the majority. This is one of the reasons why the guerrilla movement in Latin America is in crisis. In the case of Peru in 1965—which received a stamp of approval in the majority resolution—Héctor Béjar's book offers extraordinarily clear testimony on how guerrilla warfare as a *strategy* diverts revolutionists from party building, separates them from the masses, and leads them into a blind alley.

A Step Backward

I have already discussed the damaging consequences of the majority line within the ranks of the world Trotskyist movement,

where it encourages ultraleftism when what is needed is to counter it. I should like to now turn to some other damaging consequences.

1. It serves to engender false hopes among comrades that they can get substantial help from the Fourth International if they engage in the "strategy" of armed struggle.

However, our movement lacks the resources to fulfill such hopes. The Fourth International is a small cadre organization. Most of its sections are unable even to maintain a regular publication of the quality and size required by their needs. They are unable, most of them, even to maintain a modest staff of full-time professional revolutionists. Problems of this nature are, of course, greatly exacerbated where the Trotskyists must remain in the underground.

The larger sections in the advanced capitalist countries that are beginning to feel the wind in their sails still remain much too small to constitute supply bases of any consequence for guerrilla movements in the colonial and semicolonial areas. In fact, to take full advantage of the openings now appearing they must concentrate all their resources, both in cadres and finances, on the struggles in their own areas, which are of course intimately bound up with those elsewhere in the world.

In Latin America and similar regions, sections should clearly understand that engagement in guerrilla struggles is a tactical problem to be weighed in the light of their own resources without being able to count on anything requisite to their needs from abroad.

The Fourth International as a whole remains at the stage where the primary task is to gather together the first contingents of cadres to be educated and trained. It must concentrate on this and not permit itself to become diverted either by the pressure to make forced marches in hope of a "breakthrough" or by alluring "shortcuts" promised by new "strategies."

To deviate from this can only encourage adventures or inspire bombastic propaganda that soon reveals its emptiness.

The "strategy" of armed struggle proclaimed by the majority does not conform to the real tasks that must be carried out to improve the size, strength, and material capacities of the Fourth International.

2. Public propaganda in favor of the "strategy" of armed struggle does not help us in the discussion taking place among the Latin American revolutionists and those elsewhere who think like them. It hinders the work of bringing those breaking from

foquismo or its variants toward Leninism. What we require is redoubled efforts on the part of the leadership of the world Trotskyist movement to defend the Leninist strategy of party building, and to produce "at least a minimum" of concrete examples to indicate in a practical way what we mean.

3. The "orientation and method" of guerrilla warfare hampers engagement in the molecular processes going on in the depths of the masses.

The immediate problem is to win more cadres. They can be won in the vanguard through polemical material in defense of the Leninist strategy of party building along with concrete proposals to engage in work among the masses in a correct way.

These proposals should be drawn up in accordance with the method outlined in the Transitional Program. But this means utilizing democratic slogans and economic demands related to life in the plants, mills, mines, and other sectors of industry, that may at first sight appear to be very modest. It includes similar work in the countryside. And among the oppressed minorities, students, and women.

The "strategy" of armed struggle, which is a strategy of direct confrontation with the state power, with little regard to the necessary correlatives—as viewed from the standpoint of Leninism—stands squarely in the way of such work.

4. The new line increases the difficulty of recruiting to our ranks on the basis of a clear espousal of the Leninist theory of the role of a combat party.

The opportunities for getting a fair hearing are much better than formerly. The setbacks and defeats suffered by the guerrilla movements in a number of countries have led many of the participants and the circles sympathetic to them to begin reevaluating. This does not mean that they will automatically come up with the right answers. They may be attracted toward Maoism, or even Popular Frontism. We have to contend energetically to win them to the program of Trotskyism.

The possibilities of recruitment are excellent—provided we appear as Leninists genuinely convinced of the correctness of the strategy of party building and energetically doing everything possible to carry out this strategy. The line of the majority hampers recruitment from these sources. The Fourth International gives the appearance of coming over to positions that they have begun to question. If these positions are correct, then the Fourth International only looks ridiculous trying to lend authority to them from the works of Lenin and Trotsky. It would be

more appropriate to explain how the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky blocked the Fourth International for so many years from moving over to the "strategy" of armed struggle sooner.

Which Was the Key Document?

In the discussion prior to the last world congress, I called attention in my article "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America" to what appeared to me to be various contradictions between the draft resolution on Latin America and the draft of the main political resolution, "On the New Rise of the World Revolution." These differences were so substantial that I wrote:

In short, the draft resolution on Latin America appears to have been drawn up on the basis of a quite different concept of the key problem facing the Fourth International and the orientation and tasks required to solve it than the concept expressed in the main resolution with its requisite orientation and tasks for the coming period. How the implicit contradiction between the two resolutions would be resolved in practice if both were adopted without either of them being substantially changed is hard to foresee.¹⁴⁹

Comrade Maitan was particularly insistent that I was wrong on this. In his view there was no contradiction between the Latin American resolution produced by the commission which he heads and the main political resolution which Comrade Germain reported on.

In his latest document, Comrade Maitan repeats that I was mistaken in my understanding of a key point in the main political resolution.¹⁵⁰ The point was:

This new revolutionary rise means that essentially proletarian forces and vanguard political currents carrying on the traditions of revolutionary Marxism and workers democracy will be in the thick of the fight, that their methods of intervening, of action, and organization will draw much closer to the Leninist norm of proletarian revolutions.¹⁵¹

According to Comrade Maitan, "It is clear that the allusion to drawing much closer to 'the Leninist norm of proletarian revolutions' refers primarily to the industrialized capitalist countries. It concerns the neocolonial countries more indirectly."¹⁵²

In short, Comrade Maitan is of the opinion that it is very unlikely that the Leninist norm will be seen in the colonial world in the foreseeable future and that—contrary to my impression—

his view is expressed in the main political resolution.

I am still of the opinion that the allusion is not *that* clear. In fact, it suggests the contrary to what Comrade Maitan affirms. The sentence in question follows immediately after a paragraph dealing with the colonial revolution and the perspective that imperialism may have to redistribute its financial and military strength in such a way as to reduce "the pressure on the colonial revolution on several fronts, stimulate its resumption and the winning of new victories."

Thus the forecast that the new revolutionary rise signified a trend toward the Leninist norm of proletarian revolutions was made in the context of dealing with the colonial revolution. I, for one, took the main resolution at its face value on this point.

Besides this very important question, the main political resolution, in its final section, "The Construction of a New Revolutionary Leadership," paid special attention to the worldwide radicalization of the youth, the great opportunities this opened for Trotskyism, the special problems created by spontanéist and similar tendencies, and how these must be met. Considerable stress was placed on party building.

On the face of it, the main resolution was acceptable. The Latin American resolution stood in contradiction to its general line.

The article by Comrades Germain and Knoeller adds considerably to the force of Comrade Maitan's contention that I was mistaken. In that event, both resolutions would appear in a different light to me. The Latin American resolution would have to be judged as the main resolution, since it set the main course to be followed by the Fourth International in the following period. The resolution presented by Comrade Germain would have to be reduced in importance. It would have to be viewed as auxiliary to the *real* main resolution that set the key policy for the Fourth International as a whole although this real main resolution bore only the modest title "Resolution on Latin America."

Such a judgment would not impugn the accuracy of the descriptive part of the main political resolution dealing with world developments as a whole since the previous congress. In that respect the resolution would remain valid. What is involved is the axis of activities set for the Fourth International, the axis for strengthening and expanding it as an organization. Specifically this was the adoption of the "strategy" of armed struggle. *That* was not in the main political resolution adopted at the last world congress.

I do not wish to give the impression that this readjustment in

view on the relative weight and importance of the two documents implies any belief that a secret division of labor occurred at the last world congress. Without a doubt, Comrade Germain genuinely believed at the time that the line of action proposed for Latin America concerned only that area and nowhere else. Similarly, I think that Comrade Maitan had not thought out the full implications of what the change in line for Latin America signified for the Fourth International in the rest of the world.

The striking similarity of the two documents now before us show that both Comrade Germain and Comrade Maitan became caught up in the logic of their positions. In trying to justify what they had started, it became necessary for them to proceed further along the road. They are still far from having reached the logical end of this course, and perhaps they will draw back.

The Correct Way to Resolve Differences

Comrades Germain and Knoeller express the fear that what I have previously said is leading our movement into an "impasse." The subheading they chose for the section in which they voiced this fear was "A Polemic Leading Nowhere."

I hope that their fears will prove to be unjustified. True, I tend to discount their fears, inasmuch as from where I stand, our movement is already in an impasse so far as this question is concerned. How do you escape from an impasse and begin getting from nowhere to somewhere, so far as the internal life of our movement is concerned, except through a polemic?

The issues are very important, in my opinion, and we should do our utmost to clarify them in preparation for the next world congress.

Already I can see some progress. When the new line was first proposed, some of us were struck by the self-contradiction of a *tactic* of rural guerrilla warfare projected on a continental scale for a prolonged period. We assumed that it was a tactic proposed in the traditional sense of our movement, meaning that it was conceived as an auxiliary to the strategy of party building. To us it seemed obvious that a "tactic" could not be extended on such a broad scale and for such a long time. We thus sought to make this self-contradiction apparent to everyone.

Besides this, it seemed improper to us for the Fourth International as a whole to become directly involved in tactical questions best left to the judgment of the sections.

That stage has now been passed. It turned out that what was

being projected was not a tactic but a new strategy. Thus the discussion has clearly shifted to the level of strategy. Of prime importance among the points involved in determining the validity of the new strategy is its connection with past positions of our movement, for this concerns the continuity of our theoretical heritage. That has now been taken up in the two new documents submitted by Comrade Maitan and by Comrades Germain and Knoeller, and by this reply.

The new strategy affects areas other than Latin America, despite assurances to the contrary, as I have tried to prove above. This includes both the vanguard and our own movement. In my opinion, Comrades Maitan, Germain, and Knoeller have not yet met this issue. They have instead sought to avoid it or to deny it. I have sought to present the situation in such a way as to encourage further discussion from them on the question.

One of the gains of the polemic is the clarification that has resulted as to the importance of the differences. It would have been preferable, of course, if these had turned out to be only minor. It is now clear that underlying the opposing positions at the last world congress were deeper questions, especially concerning the axis of party-building tasks for the Fourth International. Some comrades may find this worrisome. However, the clarification is a positive development. Clearer understanding of what is involved should make it easier to resolve the differences in a principled way and to arrive at greater homogeneity in the next period.

Of course, the atmosphere can become heated, and this is not without danger. In fact, it must be said frankly that signs of undue factionalism have appeared in several areas, the attack on Comrade Moreno being one of them. The most responsible comrades of both sides (and those who have not yet made up their minds) have a common interest in doing their utmost to put a damper on such attacks, which point in the direction of unprincipled factionalism.

The main danger arises from any sector trying to substitute organizational measures for ideological confrontation and political clarification. The repercussions of reprisals of that kind would surely be felt internationally.

Although the discussion has transcended Latin America, I hope that the Latin American comrades will find themselves in better position—now that the repression has eased in some countries—to contribute to the discussion than was possible for them in the discussion prior to the last world congress. What they

have to say will be listened to with the utmost attention in view of the origin of the dispute.

But the comrades in other parts of the world should also express themselves. The new line will inevitably affect their work if it has not already done so. Not even the Trotskyists in such economically advanced countries as Great Britain, Canada, and the United States have been exempt from the repercussions, as I have sought to indicate in this reply.

Argentina and Bolivia— the Balance Sheet

I. Two Orientations

The differences over orientation which led a minority of delegates to vote against the "Resolution on Latin America" at the last world congress have not lessened in the three years since then. To the contrary, the dispute has spread beyond the frame of that continent. Moreover, differences have developed on various other, although related, questions. These differences center, in the main, around the problem of how to go about building mass revolutionary parties in the context of the current situation facing the Fourth International.

Today it is clear that two tendencies have been forming around issues of vital importance to the future of the world Trotskyist movement. One tendency, continuing the line formulated in the "Resolution on Latin America," that is, the "turn" adopted by the majority at the Ninth World Congress (the Third World Congress

This document was coauthored by Hugo Blanco, Peter Camejo, Joseph Hansen, Aníbal Lorenzo, and Nahuel Moreno. Peter Camejo is a leader of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. Aníbal Lorenzo has been a leader of the Argentine Trotskyist movement since the 1940s. "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet" was submitted to the December 2-6, 1972, meeting of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International as a contribution to the discussion on Latin America. Sections II and III, "The Lesson of Bolivia" and "The Lesson of Argentina," were presented for a vote. On "The Lesson of Bolivia" the result was 11 for, 18 against, 2 abstentions, and 1 not voting. On "The Lesson of Argentina" the result was 11 for, 15 against, 3 abstentions, and 1 not voting. The English text of this document was first published in the *International Internal Discussion Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), vol. 10, no. 1, January 1973.

Since Reunification), is committed to a strategy of engaging in guerrilla war, or preparing for this type of struggle, with little regard for the size of our own forces or the real situation they face. The other tendency holds to the line it defended at the last world congress, that is, the line advanced by the Fourth International from its foundation, of trying to link up with the masses through consistent application of the method advanced in the Transitional Program.

In this contribution to the discussion, we propose to examine how the two lines have met the test of reality in Bolivia and Argentina, and what the extension of the majority line on guerrilla war to other continents signifies for the Fourth International.

Before beginning on these themes, however, we propose for the sake of convenience to summarize the two positions.

1. The Main Axis of Work

According to the majority, the perspective in Latin America was fundamentally rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period. The "Resolution on Latin America" stated this very clearly:

Even in the case of countries where large mobilizations and class conflicts in the cities may occur first, civil war will take manifold forms of armed struggle, in which the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare, the term having primarily a geographical-military meaning and not necessarily implying an exclusively peasant composition of the fighting detachments (or even necessarily preponderantly peasant composition). In this sense, armed struggle in Latin America means fundamentally guerrilla warfare.¹

Comrade Livio Maitan considered this so basic that he quoted it in a public article a year later, stating that he shared the "conclusion of the great majority of Latin-American revolutionists—that is, for a phase of the revolution whose length cannot be predicted a priori but which in general will probably be long, the armed struggle will be fundamentally a guerrilla struggle." To this he added: "If you take account of the geographical facts, the demographical structures of the majority of the population, and the technical and military considerations stressed by Che himself, it follows that the variant of rural guerrilla warfare on a continentwide scale will be the most probable one."²

Against this view, the minority predicted that the revolutionary struggle would tend to shift to the urban centers. The minority pointed to two significant indications of this—the uprising in Santo Domingo in 1965 and the massive student demonstrations in Mexico City in 1968, the year before the world congress. The minority held that these events, along with what had happened in France in May-June 1968, testified to the correctness of the prognosis that the coming upheavals throughout the world would come much closer to the Leninist norm of proletarian revolutions than had been the case from the end of World War II up to the victory of the Cuban revolution.

The majority has shifted somewhat from the stand they took at the last world congress. The shift, however, has been to play down rural guerrilla war and to play up urban guerrilla war.

2. “Technical Preparations” vs. Implementing the Transitional Program

The basic task for our movement in Latin America, according to the majority, was to prepare technically for launching guerrilla war. This was stated in the “Resolution on Latin America” as follows:

The fundamental perspective, the only realistic perspective for Latin America, is that of an armed struggle which may last for long years. This is why the technical preparation cannot be conceived merely as one of the aspects of the revolutionary work, but as the fundamental aspect on a continental scale, and one of the fundamental aspects in countries where the minimum conditions have not yet been met.³

To engage in technical preparations is of course merely a necessary phase in the practical application of the theory of guerrilla war. If you agree with the theory then you are bound to carry it out in practice.

The minority defended a different theory and therefore pointed to practical work corresponding to that theory:

The key task facing the vanguard in Latin America, as elsewhere, still remains the construction of a revolutionary Marxist party. This takes priority over all questions of tactics and strategy in the sense that these must be directed to achieving this end as the decisive link in the revolutionary process. It is not enough to say, as the resolution does in point 19, that “The existence and functioning of a revolutionary party, far

from being an outworn schema of outmoded Marxists, corresponds to the concrete and ineluctable needs of the development of the armed struggle itself. . . . ”

The party is not a means to the armed struggle, as this sentence seems to say; the armed struggle is a means to bring the proletariat to power under the leadership of the party. Construction of the party must be viewed and presented as the central task, the main orientation, the almost exclusive preoccupation of the vanguard. And the explosiveness of the situation in Latin America does not lessen the need; it intensifies it.⁴

The minority criticized the Latin American resolution for paying little attention to the radicalizing youth as a field of recruitment, and suggested that this be rectified:

So far as the strategy of our movement is concerned, the main characteristics of this thrust of the youth in a revolutionary direction are (1) its occurrence in urban centers, (2) its involvement of considerable masses, (3) its tendency to try to link up with the workers or other sectors of the masses and to draw them into action.

It thus follows that the problem of developing transitional slogans and measures to attract these forces to the Fourth International is an acute one. What does the draft resolution on Latin America contribute to help solve this problem in that sector of the world? The answer is, nothing.⁵

The minority placed considerable emphasis on the resolution's displacement of the Transitional Program, its method, and the practical tasks it outlines.

3. Unrelieved Reaction vs. Possible Concessions

As the majority saw it in 1969, civil war was raging throughout Latin America. “Thus not only in a historical sense but in a more direct and immediate one, Latin America has entered a period of revolutionary explosions and conflicts, of armed struggle on different levels against the native ruling classes and imperialism, and of prolonged civil war on a continental scale.”⁶

The majority tempered this by saying that the existence of a civil war on a continental scale did not imply “the simplistic interpretation of an inevitable collapse of the system.” If the revolutionists did not act in time, “imperialism and indigenous capitalism will reorganize, if only precariously, alternating between ‘new’ and traditional solutions.”⁷

Despite this saving clause, the authors of the resolution saw

little room left for maneuver by either imperialism or the indigenous bourgeoisie. ". . . Faced with the Cuban workers state, the bourgeoisie cannot help but align itself on the side of imperialism (leaving aside possible temporary diplomatic maneuvers) and is proving itself absolutely incapable of achieving a program of even the most modest democratic reforms." Still more emphatically: "The national bourgeois strata linked to modern industry arise or develop by intertwining themselves completely within the imperialist structures and in strictest dependence on them. They are intrinsically incapable of the least independent action in either the economic or political fields."⁸

With substantial democratic reforms "absolutely" excluded and the national bourgeoisie intrinsically incapable of the least independent action, the majority not only saw no alternative except guerrilla warfare, they held that it had a bright future. It could well detonate a sequence of revolutionary events, just as Che Guevara had believed.

In a situation of prerevolutionary crisis such as Latin America is now experiencing on a continental scale, guerrilla warfare can in fact stimulate a revolutionary dynamic, even if at the start the attempt may seem to have come from abroad or to be unilateral (which was the case with Che's Bolivian guerrilla movement).⁹

The minority agreed that the so-called national bourgeoisie in Latin America, as elsewhere in the colonial or semicolonial world, is incapable of granting concessions to the masses on a scale required to open a prolonged period of bourgeois democracy. However, it was dangerous, the minority argued, to take such a rigid view of the limitations facing the national bourgeoisie and their imperialist backers as to exclude on a continental scale any capacity on their part to make any significant concessions whatsoever.

The majority, of course, recognized that some oscillations would occur, but they held that these would not be of great significance. On this point the "Resolution on Latin America" states:

This does not exclude possible oscillations in the most disparate directions, including new ephemeral pseudoreformist attempts, political gambles, and even variants within the framework of military regimes (groups of officers are continually playing at "Nasserism" in several countries and the immediate import of military coups is not always the same in every given situation).¹⁰

This forecast, if such it can be called, was canceled by the very next sentences:

But this will change nothing in the general, deep-seated tendency: in a situation of chronic crisis and prerevolutionary tensions, the ruling classes will inevitably be impelled to adopt brutal repressive measures and utilize despotic and terrorist political regimes. Since these classes often are not very solid as social forces and cannot realistically contemplate solving their problems with popularly based reactionary regimes on the fascist model, military regimes remain the most likely recourse.¹¹

The minority argued that the class struggle goes through upturns and downturns that are marked by advances and retreats of the contending classes that can be of considerable, if not decisive, importance for the sections of the Fourth International in Latin America at their present state of development. Thus it was false and schematic to picture the situation in all of the countries of Latin America as being politically prerevolutionary, leaving out of account the differences between these countries and the various conjunctures affecting them. At the time of the Ninth World Congress the class struggle in some countries was on the rise (Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay, Argentina), while in others it was on the ebb. Brazil, the most important country of all, was still suffering from the effects of the counterrevolutionary coup in 1964. As for the guerrilla movements, they had suffered a series of demoralizing defeats in country after country.

Worst of all was the majority's error of laying down a tactical prescription (guerrilla war) for the entire continent. This fixed in advance "the tactics to be followed by all national sections, leaving up to them only the job of implementing the tactical formula on the local scene."¹²

The majority orientation fostered rigidity precisely in the area where the national sections should have been encouraged to hold open various possibilities, the better to take immediate advantage of any concessions, however limited, partial, or temporary, that the bourgeoisie might be compelled to make under the strain of the class struggle.

4. The Effect of the Trend Toward "Classical" Norms

The majority, while not completely excluding other variants such as phases of "military reformism," stressed a perspective of "increasingly brutal repression by the native ruling classes and

imperialism." The "Resolution on Latin America" stated categorically:

The experience of Bolivia, where all forms of normal organizational activity are continually stamped out, as well as the experience of Peru, where the repression has not let up since 1962, especially in the countryside, are absolutely clear. The same holds for Mexico where the ruling class, reverting to its most barbaric traditions, did not hesitate to stage a full-fledged massacre of the students (the Brazilian regime's official and "semiofficial" counterattack followed the same logic).¹³

The minority was not surprised by the urban uprisings that led the bourgeoisie in Peru, Bolivia, and Chile to set up reformist regimes, and that led in the case of Bolivia to the appearance of the Popular Assembly.¹⁴ "We forecast, in our arguments, that in Latin America the revolutionary struggle would tend to shift to the urban centers, and we cited as one of the first examples of that trend what happened in Santo Domingo."¹⁵

The developments in Bolivia confirmed the position of the minority at the Ninth World Congress, already mentioned, that the pattern of revolutionary struggles on a world scale was tending toward the norms exemplified by the Russian revolution of 1917.

5. Castroism vs. Leninism

In defense of their theory of guerrilla war, the majority held that the explanation for the long series of defeats suffered by those who had tried to apply it in Latin America since the Cuban revolution was to be found in practical errors—not in the concept.

"The failure of certain guerrilla experiments (in Peru, for example) came about, in large measure, more from errors in assessing the situation, the trends, and the relationship of forces among the masses than from errors in conception."¹⁶

The minority contended that this view constituted an adaptation to the position held by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara that it is possible to repeat the peculiar pattern of the Cuban revolution elsewhere in Latin America. The minority subjected this erroneous position, as well as the specific errors Guevara made in Bolivia, to detailed analysis at the Ninth World Congress.

If we summarize all these errors, we come to the following general conclusion about them, that Che Guevara put guerrilla technique—armed-

struggle technique—above politics. He put military action above party building. . . .

The conclusion to be drawn from this . . . is that first of all guerrilla warfare does not stand up as a general strategy however well it may fit in as a tactic in certain situations when it is used by a well-constructed combat party.

A second conclusion to be drawn from this experience is that it presented fresh proof that the struggle in Latin America has become more difficult and requires a better instrument than previously—it requires the construction of a combat party to a much greater degree than, say, in 1958 or 1959.¹⁷

Just as the majority failed at the Ninth World Congress to apply the method of the Transitional Program to the current situation in Latin America, so they failed to subject the Guevarist theory of guerrilla warfare to critical analysis.

The truth of it is that the resolution is a rather faithful reflection of the publicly expressed views of the Cuban leadership on this question. . . .

The proposed tactic can hardly be weighed properly without referring to its relation to the success of the Cuban revolution and to the way, since then, it has been extrapolated by the Cuban leadership in Latin America and elsewhere. The resolution fails to do this in even the most summary fashion.¹⁸

Comrade Hugo González Moscoso, one of the leaders of the majority, had indicated the source of his views on this question two years before the Ninth World Congress: "In the prevailing conditions in Latin America, the results achieved by the guerrillas in Cuba can be realized in any country. Therefore, I say that guerrilla warfare is incontrovertibly the road revolutionaries must take to liberate their peoples from capitalist and imperialist exploitation."¹⁹

Comrade P'eng Shu-tse said of this statement: "The ideas of Comrade Moscoso are a direct reflection of the ideas contained in the OLAS General Declaration."²⁰

Commenting further on this, Comrade P'eng said: "The adoption of the strategy of guerrilla warfare by sections in Latin America and even by the International leadership is a direct reflection of the Castroist influence upon the International. This situation raises the logical question of the relationship and differences between Castroism and Trotskyism."²¹

How accurately Comrade P'eng put his finger on the source of the concepts behind the "turn" at the Ninth World Congress was

shown when it became known later (it was not reported at the congress) that the PRT (*Combatiente*) had publicly favored adopting the Castroist strategy and tactics as early as 1968: "We believe that our party should clearly pronounce itself in favor of the world revolutionary strategy formulated by Castroism."²²

Comrade P'eng said in addition:

We, of course, support the Cuban workers' state against imperialism like other workers' states, and we can on certain specific issues even give critical support to the Cuban leadership against this or that tendency, such as giving critical support to their attack on Moscow's line of peaceful coexistence and the peaceful road to socialism. On the other hand, we must thoroughly criticize all the Cuban leadership's weaknesses. We must criticize such things as their support of the guerrilla war strategy, pointing out that this is not an alternative strategy to the peaceful-road-to-socialism strategy advocated by the Stalinists, but that objectively in the long run, the strategy of guerrilla warfare will only help the opportunism of the Stalinists as well as American imperialism.²³

6. Two Views on the Place of Guerrilla War

The minority stressed the fact that it did not oppose guerrilla warfare per se. Guerrilla warfare, the minority held, could prove to be advantageous in certain situations as an adjunct in mass struggles. The use of guerrilla warfare was a tactical question to be determined by the various sections. What the minority objected to was the conversion of the guerrilla tactic into a strategic orientation that inevitably cut across and superseded the strategic orientation of building a revolutionary mass party.

The minority pointed out that the Trotskyist movement was not without recent experience in the problems of guerrilla war, having tested it out since the victory of the Cuban revolution and having learned some important lessons about it, in some instances the hard way.

In particular, the minority stressed the importance of what had been learned in Peru during the great upsurge of the peasants led by Hugo Blanco in the early sixties.

Up until the "turn" at the Ninth World Congress, this had been regarded as an acquisition of the world Trotskyist movement as a whole. It should be recalled how Comrade Maitan once spoke of it. In a polemic against Régis Debray in 1967, Comrade Maitan pointed out:

The Peruvian experience has undoubtedly been one of the most

momentous of the past five years, an experience rich and varied, outstanding in the multiplicity of movements, the application of palpably different lines, the temporary successes followed by devastating repressions, and by tragic setbacks. No serious attempt to make generalizations valid for all of Latin America can be undertaken without a detailed and profound analysis of what has occurred in Peru.²⁴

Citing against Debray what had been achieved under Hugo Blanco's leadership, Comrade Maitan said that

to gain even the slightest understanding of Hugo Blanco's work, one must start from the context in which it was executed and grasp its objective implications in the given conditions. When he began his work among the peasants, Blanco was reacting on the one hand against adventurist and putschist tendencies which had developed within his own organization; and on the other hand, he was breaking with the tradition of a certain kind of urban left, which was, indeed, partly bound to obsolete schemas, partly always ready to *discuss* new roads but incapable of taking practical steps to establish ties with the peasant masses. Blanco's experience did not in any way develop in accordance with abstract models but in ever closer association with the real mass movement. Now, after the fact, only a blind man could fail to realize the truly historic importance such work has had in educating the peasant sectors, even aside from the fact that it is still too early to assess the impact on the future of the revolutionary movement made by the Tacna trial and the events which followed it in which Hugo Blanco emerged as a hero of the Peruvian and Latin-American people.²⁵

The position held in common by the leadership of the Fourth International at that time can be judged by the approving way in which Comrade Maitan cited Hugo Blanco's views as expressed in some letters written not long after he was imprisoned:

In the first place, for those who have imputed reformist tendencies to Blanco (perhaps because he used the organizing of unions as a means and concerned himself also with the most modest needs of the peasants in his region, not overlooking the fact that partial gains could prove valuable in reinforcing the self-confidence of the peasants), the following passage should be noted: "We have discovered a broad and sure road and we are advancing. Why should we lose our heads now? Those comrades who are in prison must understand that the party cannot mobilize itself in harmony with their weariness at confinement but only in accordance with the needs of the Peruvian people and the possibilities open to them. If there are some who are free and in a hurry and who feel that they are able to be guerrillas, that is magnificent! Let them prove it by devoting themselves to a peasant union, the one in Chumbivilcas for example,

coming and going on foot. After that they can talk to us about guerrilla warfare, if they have enough strength left. Doesn't organizing peasant unions train militants in the nomad life? Doesn't it give them knowledge of the terrain and the population? And it brings the most important result—the conscious incorporation of the broad masses in the struggle. We must gain as much ground as we can before the armed clash comes in order to be sure of victory.”²⁶

Comrade Maitan singled out another passage for quotation, calling it “very important”:

“As to the tactics of guerrilla warfare, I am completely in accord that they should be taught to defense committees. These should not be empiric, and in this respect, the vanguard party has a role to play. All knowledge of guerrilla tactics *which can be adapted* to our militia strategy must be taken advantage of.

“Manco II, for example, who surrounded Cuzco ready to crush it, was abandoned by his troops because the time for planting or harvesting—I don't remember which—had come for potatoes.”²⁷

“None of that interferes with guerrilla organization. Some units can be organized to aid the militias. But the fundamental organism for the open struggle in Peru will be the militia of the unions led by the party. Let us take all the advantages of the peculiarities of our situation.

“We will not part with anything, having advanced so much.

“You say, ‘it is astride the *campesino* movement that the FIR should face the open struggle for power.’ I agree, it was so in Cuba. The difference lies in that they first grabbed the arms and then mounted the horse. We are on the horse but lack the arms. Why get off the horse?”²⁸

Hugo Blanco did not change his views during the subsequent years he spent in prison, as can be seen from the material included in his book *Land or Death: The Peasant Struggle in Peru*.²⁹ In his criticisms of what was or was not done by the Peruvian Trotskyists, he indicated only two weaknesses—not enough emphasis was placed on party building, and at his trial in Tacna too much stress was placed on the guerrilla aspects of the Trotskyist involvement. Thus in a letter to Joseph Hansen written in January 1970, while he was still in prison, he said:

Another item in which Moreno was right as against us: My defense and the defense of the happenings in Chaupimayo should not have been that of a “Trotskyist guerrilla” as was done in general, but as an example of the application of the Transitional Program *in opposition* to guerrillaism. By way of contrast it stood out as an example of armed struggle that arose as a result of work among the masses.³⁰

At the Ninth World Congress the minority delegates and observers appealed to the gathering not to brush aside the experience of the Fourth International in guerrilla warfare, in particular what had been learned during Hugo Blanco's leadership of the peasant struggle in Peru, in which our movement had the honor of mobilizing the largest and most dynamic peasant movement in recent history in Latin America. They especially pointed to the concrete pattern that had been worked out on how to proceed to win leadership of the peasants.

The majority paid no attention. They disregarded the lessons learned from the Trotskyist movement's own engagement in the peasant struggle in Latin America.

7. The Danger of a Revival of Stalinism

The majority held that the consciousness of the masses in Latin America, including that of the peasantry, stood at such a high level as to have ended the debate over whether it was possible to win socialism via a peaceful road.

"In Latin America, the polemic between the advocates of the 'democratic' and 'peaceful' road and the advocates of the revolutionary road has been entirely outmoded. . . ." ³¹

The Mexican delegation, impressed by the arguments of the majority on this point, stated: "As the draft resolution clearly recognizes, the debate over peaceful and violent roads to revolution in Latin America is concluded." ³²

These statements were made, of course, before the experience in Peru and Bolivia and above all the success of the Unidad Popular in Chile gave fresh life to bourgeois nationalism, and, along with it, the Popular Frontism of the Stalinists and Social Democrats on a wide scale in Latin America, sweeping not a few guerrilla fighters off their feet. ³³

The role of Castroism in helping to pave the way for such a development was explained in some detail by the minority at the Ninth World Congress:

But by confining the dispute with the Stalinists almost exclusively to the issue of armed struggle, and limiting it even further to the question of rural guerrilla war, the Cubans gave precious political ground to their opponents by default. Thus the Stalinist betrayers of the revolutionary struggle in Venezuela were able to advance telling arguments on why the workers need a revolutionary party. For the Venezuelan Stalinists, who cited Lenin in a completely abstract way, this was only a smoke screen;

but the Cubans were not able to answer them effectively and this could not fail to influence at least some good revolutionary-minded militants. In the same way, the Cubans failed to offer an adequate challenge to the Stalinists in the urban centers, making it easier for them to retain a rather large following which they, of course, are now seeking to use in their wheeling and dealing in the bourgeois electoral arena.

The Cubans likewise conceded the field of theory to the Stalinists. . . .

The Stalinists took full advantage of the ineptness of the Cubans, or their hesitation at speaking out because of possible economic pressure from Moscow, to further obscure and bury the question.

The result of these mistakes was that even in such a favorable situation as the one in Venezuela, with the prestige of the Cuban revolution behind them, and the not immaterial advantages of state power, the Cubans ended up in their factional struggle with the Stalinists in a small minority.³⁴

Events have confirmed in the most striking way the accuracy of the analysis offered by the minority at the Ninth World Congress on this question.

8. The Correct Field of Work

The majority discounted the proletariat as an immediate field of work. "In fact, in most of the countries the most probable variant is that for a rather long period the peasants will have to bear the main weight of the struggle and the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie in considerable measure will provide the cadres of the movement."³⁵

It is true that this statement was sandwiched between a reaffirmation of the leading role of the working class in the long run and a qualifier on the possibility of the leading role of the proletariat being exercised through various forms. It should be added that nowhere did the majority at the Ninth World Congress deny the revolutionary role of the proletariat—to the contrary, they carefully affirmed this role.

Nonetheless, for the immediate period ahead, the fields of endeavor were clearly specified in the resolution to be the peasantry for the "main weight of the struggle" and the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie for the "cadres of the movement." This conclusion, of course, followed logically from the majority theory of guerrilla war and perhaps their observation of the experience of various guerrilla efforts in Latin America.

The minority argued for the proletarian orientation outlined in the Transitional Program, and for following what the Bolsheviks

had taught in regard to cadre building—that even under the most brutal repression revolutionists have “no choice but to continue their patient political and organizational work—in the underground or in exile.”³⁶

Comrade P'eng said: “Replacing the Transitional Program with the strategy of guerrilla warfare, neglecting the most serious work in the working class and its traditional class-struggle organizations, i.e., the trade unions, and continuing to adapt ourselves to different petty-bourgeois currents and leaderships, cannot only not build an International, but will lead our movement into a blind alley.”³⁷

As indicated above, the minority stressed the importance of making a turn toward the radicalized youth, pointing to the weight of the youth in the urban centers, its capacity to engage in demonstrations in considerable numbers, and its tendency to try to link up with the workers and other sectors of the masses and to draw them into action.

The minority took this view not only because of the evident openings shown to exist by the experience in France, the United States, and many other countries, but because the world Trotskyist movement has looked toward the youth since its foundation, embodying the orientation in the Transitional Program.

9. The Struggle for Democratic Demands

The “Resolution on Latin America” failed to deal adequately with the struggle for democratic demands, of which the central one is agrarian reform.

Agrarian reform is an important issue throughout the continent and plays a key role in the politics of countries like Brazil, Peru, Colombia, and in Central America.

The “Resolution on Latin America” contains a paragraph on the peasantry that mentions their “land hunger” and other motives that lead to their becoming radicalized. Instead of stressing the central importance of democratic demands around the land question in mobilizing the peasantry, the resolution concludes with an exaggerated view of the political level of the peasantry on a continental scale. According to the resolution, the peasantry “have largely assimilated the lesson of the Cuban revolution, whose fortunes they continually follow; have learned a great deal from the guerrilla experiences and are not cut off from the student revolutionary movements, whose influence reaches them through a thousand different channels.”³⁸

The peasant movement is closely bound up with the struggles of the oppressed nationalities. The "Resolution on Latin America" mentions this correctly but only in passing. No lessons are drawn as to the importance of this to the sections of the Fourth International in Latin America. Nothing is said about how to go about this work concretely.

Comrade P'eng, basing himself on the lessons taught by Lenin and Trotsky and on the experience of the revolutionary movement in the colonial and semicolonial countries, particularly China, stressed the need to clarify the democratic aspect of the Latin American revolution. He challenged the majority comrades to explain why they had left the struggle for democratic demands out of their "continental strategy." His challenge went unanswered.

The fact is that the majority discounted the democratic side of the Latin American revolution. While they admitted the possibility that the revolution could begin "as a democratic anti-imperialist revolution in regard to its objectives and the consciousness of the masses," they held that the possibility "does not affect the inherent logic of the process with all its inevitable implications for the lineup and role of the social classes."³⁹

The process they referred to was the dynamics of permanent revolution. As an abstract statement, the resolution is correct in what it says on this. In the absence of any concrete proposals, however, the theory of permanent revolution is not used as a guide to action.

This follows from the error of the majority in overrating the level of consciousness of the peasantry. A concrete program of democratic demands is hardly necessary if the peasantry in their thinking have already gone beyond this stage of the revolution. By not paying attention to this our comrades can find themselves on the sidelines when the democratic opening of the revolution bursts upon them.

10. Broadening and Deepening of an Erroneous Line

The minority contended at the Ninth World Congress that the guerrilla orientation adopted by the majority could not be confined to Latin America.

If the draft resolution on Latin America were to be passed in its present form by the coming world congress, our movement would be hard put to explain why the orientation decided on as good for Latin America was

considered to be bad for the rest of the colonial and semicolonial world. It would certainly be contended that such a position is inconsistent and that such a sharp geographical demarcation cannot reasonably be made.⁴⁰

The majority leaders did not take a common stand on this very important question. Some were equivocal, stating that the resolution dealt only with Latin America and that it was improper to raise such a question in this context. Comrade Germain was emphatic in stating that the orientation applied only to Latin America. Later, Comrades Germain and Knoeller, in arguing for the necessity of armed actions by “small detachments of the vanguard of the workers parties and trade unions” under certain conditions, said the following:

Let us repeat again, to avoid any misunderstanding, that these considerations apply only to prerevolutionary conditions and in a precise political context (the absence of democratic liberties, the impossibility of a gradual ascent in the mass movement, etc.). There is *no question* of mechanically extending this reasoning to all countries in the world, least of all the United States, Japan, Great Britain, Germany, etc.⁴¹

The majority reasoning on this question was, of course, extended by various comrades to other countries, including France, which hardly belongs to the colonial or semicolonial sector. We will return to this later.

11. A Harvest of Disasters

At the Ninth World Congress the majority did not spell out in practical terms what they contemplated doing. As against the euphoria whipped up by the leaders of the majority on the possibility of a quick “breakthrough” to be gained by resorting to guerrilla action in selected areas of the world, the minority expressed the gravest forebodings concerning the end results of their projected course of action.

Those end results included a crippling disaster in Bolivia and the political degeneration of the guerrilla group in Argentina. We will cover these subjects in detail later.

12. Adaptation to Ultraleftism

The majority at the Ninth World Congress paid little attention to the arguments offered by those opposed to adopting guerrilla war as a main strategic line. Instead they persisted in and

deepened their error. The minority, consequently, began to assess the meaning of this development, coming to the conclusion that it must be characterized *politically* as an adaptation to ultraleftism.

Thus two concepts concerning the main road of the revolution were adumbrated at the congress.

The source of the pressure for elevating "rural guerrilla warfare" into a principle is clear. It is the guerrilla fighters, particularly in Latin America . . . and significant sections of the radicalizing youth, that is, those who have not yet gained political experience and who have made a mystique out of the fate of Che Guevara and who don't know much about Hugo Blanco's example.

The course prescribed by Comrade Maitan and made official in the Latin-American resolution represents a concession to ultraleftism. This is how it must be characterized objectively. . . .

Consistent application of the course charted by Comrade Maitan would prove disastrous for the Fourth International. The line could hardly be confined to Latin America or even the colonial world generally, for the same ultraleft tendencies to which the adaptation has been made are operative in the imperialist centers. Fostering an ultraleft course in Latin America would surely be paralleled by permissiveness toward ultraleftism, if not worse, in the imperialist centers. In fact, there is evidence that this has already been occurring in the quite different context of conditions in Britain.

The adoption of a resolution by a world congress elevating "rural guerrilla war" into a main strategy should therefore be regarded as a grave development. After full discussion on the issues in all the sections of the Fourth International, every effort should be made at the next world congress to rectify this error.⁴²

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In the discussion since then, the majority has sought to show that the "turn" toward guerrilla warfare adopted at the Ninth World Congress comes within the tradition of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky. The only quotations of any substance that they have been able to adduce in seeming support of their contention are a few items by Lenin written during one of the passing phases of the 1905 revolution in Russia. Despite the most assiduous search, they have been unable to find anything favoring their position in the volumes Lenin wrote following that episodic experience. That Lenin never returned to the subject was disregarded by the comrades of the majority. It meant nothing to them.

As for Trotsky, the greatest military expert and practitioner of

armed struggle the Marxist movement has yet produced, the majority, after some attempts to use him, which were challenged by the minority, appears to have given up. After all, Trotsky's position on guerrilla war—on which he wrote in the last years of his life—is too well known to be easily abused.

Another tack attempted by the majority has been to use the terms "guerrilla war" and "armed struggle" synonymously. The gain in this is that guerrilla fighters in many parts of the world use the terms in the same way. Thus when the majority write or speak about "armed struggle," it signifies "guerrilla war" to the devotees of that strategy, while to Marxists, including our own movement—at least in the past—it has meant the armed struggle of masses of the proletariat and the peasantry in a genuine uprising or civil war. Through this semantic legerdemain the majority seeks to present the "turn" toward guerrilla warfare as being within the tradition of armed struggle as taught and practiced by Lenin and Trotsky.

It can be suggested that it would help greatly to clarify the differences if the majority gave up this feeble line of argument and frankly admitted that their orientation is not a mere continuation of Trotskyism but an attempted introduction into Trotskyism of a strategy that originated elsewhere.

It is high time to advance the discussion. This can only be done by turning to the living reality and appraising it in the light of Marxist analysis.

In the three years since the debate at the Ninth World Congress, the two lines have been subjected to the test of experience. It is now possible to draw a balance sheet on the results in Bolivia and Argentina, the two areas where the decision to convert guerrilla war into a strategic orientation has been carried out in life. This is what we now propose to do.

II. The Lesson of Bolivia

At the Ninth World Congress, the comrades of the majority assured the delegates that the validity of the "turn" toward guerrilla warfare would soon be confirmed in Bolivia. The majority comrades were supremely confident that reformist interludes were excluded in this poverty-stricken country rapaciously exploited by imperialism and the native ruling class. The immediate perspective, according to the majority, pointed solely to guerrilla war. The conditions were excellent for opening up a front. An agreement had been reached with the leaders of the Ejército de Liberación Nacional. Even if an early victory should not be won, the renewal of guerrilla war would have important international repercussions. With Trotskyists in the leadership it could signify a rapid "breakthrough" for the Fourth International of the kind that Comrade Maitan held was absolutely essential. With enormous enthusiasm, the majority approved the "Resolution on Latin America," and returned home to begin a campaign of support for the new Trotskyist-led guerrilla front in Bolivia, although it had not yet been launched.

It is important to understand how the majority leadership viewed the reality in Bolivia. They excluded either a reformist interlude or an urban insurrection. Well in advance of the Ninth World Congress this had been made clear publicly by Comrade González (as, for instance, in his contribution to *Fifty Years of World Revolution*).⁴³ A typical statement was the following in a report from La Paz:

There is no possibility of a reformist period of legal struggles, of a return to traditional trade-union activity. These are luxuries that the military regime cannot afford.

Therefore the perspective opened for the Bolivian people is one of direct struggle to oust the military from power and build a workers and peasants government which would begin a reorganization of the country on socialist bases. This struggle can only be undertaken by armed means—by guerrilla warfare in the countryside, the mines, and the cities. This is the real, concrete perspective. All others are utopian and can only lead to the defeat of the masses, even in the hypothetical case of a change of rulers.⁴⁴

Comrade Maitan held essentially the same view of the perspective in Bolivia. He, too, outlined it publicly in advance of the Ninth World Congress. Speaking of the defeat of Che Guevara's guerrilla front in Bolivia, he said:

The events which have followed the defeat of the guerrillas have also, in the last analysis, confirmed Guevara's fundamental option. . . .

. . . the Bolivian revolutionists not only defend the concepts which inspired Che's action against opportunists of all stripes but they also consider that the perspective of new armed clashes in Bolivia remains fundamental.

Given the economic and social situation within the country, the capitalist regime—whether it is led by Barrientos or any of his possible successors—will only be able to survive through violence of the most systematic sort.⁴⁵ This implies that more or less legal preparatory and organizational work will be impossible for the workers and peasants movement. And, in the present context, this also excludes any perspective of the struggle taking the form of an urban insurrection at the outset. The explosive contradictions remain in the country and dramatic conflicts are still possible.

In fact, we must start from the reality that a civil war situation exists in Bolivia. . . .

This means, more concretely, that the method of guerrilla warfare beginning in the rural areas is still the correct method. Once guerrilla warfare is unleashed, even under conditions which are in several ways less favorable than was the case last year, the possibilities for political and military initiatives will multiply very rapidly.⁴⁶

Comrade Maitan spelled this out still more specifically in his letter of that time projecting the possibility of building the Fourth International via a "breakthrough" in Bolivia. ". . . it is necessary to understand and to explain that at the present stage the International will be built around Bolivia."⁴⁷

Such were the perspectives and concepts, ratified by the majority at the Ninth World Congress, under which our Bolivian comrades sought to achieve a quick "breakthrough" in the Bolivian class struggle.

1. From Barrientos to Banzer

Even while they were developing their theory of a repression so severe as to admit of no other recourse except guerrilla war in the struggle against General René Barrientos, the leading figure in the military junta that toppled the Paz Estenssoro regime on

November 4, 1964, our comrades of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario reported happenings that actually showed other possibilities.⁴⁸ Here is an example:

On May 1 [1968], a militant, anti-imperialist, and anti-military mass meeting was held under vigorous radical slogans. It openly condemned the Barrientos dictatorship. In the major cities—Oruro, Cochabamba, Potosí, Santa Cruz—there were similar demonstrations. In Cochabamba, the district prefect, General Reque Terán . . . appeared at the demonstration backed up by force.⁴⁹ He tried to speak to the crowd, but they did not let him. There was a violent reaction from the workers, who shouted: "You murdered Che!" "Imperialist lackey!" "Gorilla!" He had to retreat in the face of the general clamor.

Besides the militant slogans indicated, there were shouts of acclaim for Che and the guerrillas in these urban demonstrations. The government massed all its forces, police, the national guard, the army, the air force (Mustangs buzzed the demonstrations in La Paz to frighten the demonstrators), but it did not dare break them up. The junta was cowed and retreated. It is clear that more than expressing the new ascent and militant spirit of the masses, the May Day demonstrations were a victory against the government.

Even without leadership, the masses went into the streets ready for a fight. It was clear that the spirit of the masses was to incorporate into their mobilizations the lessons left by the guerrillas. The masses set their struggle within the framework of the armed-struggle line. In every city, the guerrillas were present: in the slogans, on the banners, and in the spirit of the masses. The masses went out on May Day encouraged and with greater confidence.⁵⁰

It is quite true that the name of the martyred Che appeared everywhere, as our comrades in La Paz reported. But this was not the opening of another guerrilla front. It was something quite different. This was an action by the masses carried out in the streets in all the major cities. Even more significant: *the junta was cowed and retreated.*

Of similar significance was the nature of the struggle carried on by the masses. The report continues:

A general movement is in progress for increased wages and salaries. The miners are proposing restoration of the old wages and return of all trade-union property. The immediate conflict is over the teachers' demand for a salary increase from 470 to 900 pesos. The government rejected this request. The teachers met in a national convention and approved various tactics of struggle leading by stages to a general strike. Among these were work stoppages graduated by districts, lightning meetings, blocking streets, etc.⁵¹

The author of this report did his best to fit the upsurge into the schema of guerrilla war. Yet the facts themselves spoke for a different interpretation. Two things in particular should be noted: (1) The capacity of the Barrientos regime, for all its repressive nature, to retreat in face of a mass upsurge; (2) The tendency of the struggle of the masses in Bolivia to follow the "classical" pattern—the Leninist norms of proletarian revolution.

Barrientos, killed in a helicopter crash April 27, 1969, was succeeded by Vice-President Adolfo Siles Salinas. Hardly more than an ornamental piece for the junta, Siles was ousted in a coup d'état that put General Alfredo Ovando in power September 26, 1969.

Ovando permitted the trade unions to function. Traditional trade union activities were resumed and the Central Obrera Boliviana began to rebuild its structure. Throughout April, May, and June of 1970 the proletariat took advantage of the semilegal opening conceded by Ovando and engaged in continual mass mobilizations. Other sectors became involved—students, teachers, part of the urban petty bourgeoisie, and even a few sectors of the peasantry. These mass actions were sufficient to enable the COB to resume open activity. In campus demonstrations, the students went so far as to take over universities.

The ruling class faced a growing crisis since they were unable to either suppress the mass movement for the time being or to grant economic concessions on the scale required to soften the class struggle.

The deepening divisions were reflected within the armed forces. One wing, headed by General Rogelio Miranda, leaned toward attempting a repressive crackdown and tightening the ties with imperialism. The other wing, headed by General Juan José Torres, leaned toward utilizing the masses to extort concessions from imperialism, thereby gaining the means to temporarily appease the masses and defer a showdown for a more propitious moment. To a certain degree the divisions within the army even followed geographic lines, Miranda being supported by ruling circles in Santa Cruz, Torres by those in the Altiplano (La Paz region).⁵²

On June 13, 1970, the bodies of two young leftists, Jenny Koeller and her husband Elmo Catalán Avilés, a Chilean journalist, were discovered near Cochabamba. They had been atrociously tortured and then electrocuted by government agents.⁵³

Mass protest demonstrations broke out everywhere in the country. Confrontations with the army resulted in wounded and

dead. The Ovando regime was badly shaken.

It was precisely at this moment of rising mass protest, of confrontations in the streets, that the ELN opened its final guerrilla front. Under the leadership of Osvaldo "Chato" Peredo, about seventy-five young revolutionists left the scene of action where the masses were involved and set off for the mining village of Teoponte, about 100 miles north of La Paz.⁵⁴ However valid their "conception" of guerrilla war may have been, on the day they arrived—July 19, 1970—they made an error "in assessing the situation." They opened up hostilities by blowing up an American-owned gold-panning plant. For the army, the guerrilla challenge amounted to low-cost training in counterinsurgency. By mid-October only six of these young revolutionists were still alive.

Meanwhile the real class struggle in Bolivia continued. During August and September Ovando twisted and turned as the masses pressed for concessions and a sector of the ruling class countered by insisting on a crackdown. In August a battle over control of the University of San Marcos precipitated a national crisis. On October 6 Ovando resigned, turning the reins of government over to Miranda.

The consequence was an immediate mass explosion of the classic variety. Students and workers poured into the streets to block the attempted ultrarightist take-over.

The army split wide open. General Torres declared his opposition to the new junta appointed by Miranda and met with Juan Lechín, the head of the miners' union, and Siles Suazo, a former president of the country and one of the main leaders of the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR).⁵⁵

The October 8 *Le Monde* reported:

Students began to build barricades in the streets of the capital in order to block any movements by forces favorable to General Rogelio Miranda. In Catavi the powerful tin-miners' unions denounced the "fascist coup d'état of the right-wing officers" and decided to offer "conditional support" to General Juan José Torres.

The miners' federation called for arms "to defend our social gains" and posed as conditions for their support "the establishment of democratic liberties and release of the political prisoners, repeal of the antistrike decrees, nationalization of the foreign banks and all American interests, expulsion of all imperialist bodies, and the establishment of a people's government." The COB has already issued a call for a general strike throughout the country.

The COB also ordered its members to block the streets and prevent troop movements within La Paz.

Armed detachments of peasants joined in the action. Armed civilians freed political prisoners. The homes of ultrarightist military men and civilians were assaulted. The buildings of three leading newspapers were occupied. Jubilant tin miners seized police stations and announced they would demand quick wage increases.

The *New York Times* reported that on October 8

armed students took over the headquarters of the criminal division of the national police. Apparently unopposed, they were reportedly looting the offices and destroying the files. . . .

Students have also begun attacks on United States property. They entered the Bolivia-American Binational Center yesterday, hauling down an American flag and announcing that they were annexing the building to the university.

While this great mass movement—developing along the “classic” lines of a proletarian revolution—was shaking the government and splitting the army, the entrapped remnants of the Teoponte guerrilla front were still being hunted down. The last survivors finally gave up. “Chato” Peredo and his five followers were deported by Torres to Chile.

Could more dramatic (and tragic) proof be asked of the falsity of the conception that the road to the masses lies through rural guerrilla warfare?

The establishment of the Torres regime, a direct product of an urban uprising of the masses, reflected a situation in which neither the proletariat nor the bourgeoisie could gain the upper hand for the time being. The proletariat lacked the revolutionary Marxist leadership required to carry the revolution forward to victory. The weak and divided bourgeoisie could not summon the forces required to impose a counterrevolutionary solution. Torres balanced between the two sides. Naturally this was an unstable situation; either the revolution had to move forward to the establishment of a workers’ state, or the counterrevolution would recover, choose an opportune moment to strike, and then seek to establish a strong military-police dictatorship.

Torres stood between the two camps. He granted concessions to the proletariat while blocking the workers from moving definitively against the ultraright forces. He provided a shield for the

ultrarightists while striving to keep them in check. In the final analysis he conducted a holding operation for the bourgeoisie in a prerevolutionary situation.

From the proletarian point of view the concessions granted by Torres were neither far reaching nor durable, but for the moment they were very important. They included the release of political prisoners and the nationalization of some imperialist holdings. The working class and the peasantry were able to function with almost complete legality. It was a priceless opportunity for the revolutionary Marxists to come out of the underground and to work with all their energy to build their revolutionary party and to deepen and extend their ties with the masses.

On January 10, 1971, the counterrevolutionary forces attempted another coup. Again they were beaten back by mass mobilizations. This time the masses were better organized, reflecting the gains they had made since the mobilizations that had defeated General Miranda three months earlier. Thousands of armed miners paraded through La Paz. The mass movement began to openly proclaim its goal of a socialist transformation in Bolivia.

Under this mounting pressure, the Torres regime granted further concessions. The International Metal Processing Corporation was nationalized. In February, Torres conceded wage increases to the miners.

At the time of the October struggle against General Miranda, the COB and all the political parties of the left had set up a "Political Command" to coordinate their struggle. In mid-February it was decided to convert this body into a "People's Assembly." This was a most significant step. As a workers' parliament, the People's Assembly had the potentiality of becoming a soviet. The development offered incontrovertible evidence that in the main the Bolivian revolution was following the "classical" pattern of the Russian revolution.

The project testified to the deep urge of the working class to form a common fighting front in which its allies—the students, peasants, and urban petty bourgeoisie—could participate. Nevertheless the absence of representation of the army rank and file and most of the peasantry pointed to grave weaknesses that a revolutionary party would have put high on its agenda for remedial action. Another grave weakness, requiring similar action, was the absence of local supporting bodies. These began to be formed only on the eve of the coup that overthrew Torres.

In the following months, the proletariat marked time. What was lacking was a revolutionary leadership to set goals and tasks

and to block out a line of action. The Bolivian workers thus faced a crisis in leadership. To offer the popular masses no alternative but supporting Torres signified a default in political guidance. This led to a weakening of the forces that could have been mobilized behind the working class in a bid for power. As a result, the counterrevolution began to regain confidence and to spin new plots with increasing boldness.

Under cover of a religious event, the counterrevolutionary forces staged a demonstration of 15,000 persons in Santa Cruz on August 15. Forever oscillating, Torres tried to imprison the rightist generals, including Hugo Banzer Suárez.⁵⁶ This triggered an ultrarightist bid for power four days later.

At first only relatively small—but resolute—forces stood in Banzer's camp. However, the workers' leadership, consisting of such fakers and blowhards as Juan Lechín and the pro-Moscow Communist Party, sat paralyzed. They waited for Torres to do something. Torres, in turn, waited to see if a conflict could be avoided. The few hours of fatal indecisiveness in face of an impending civil war reflected in itself a rapid change in the relationship of class forces.

The army ranks began to go over to the side of the counterrevolution. Soon sectors of the virtually unarmed working class, demoralized by what was happening, refused to respond to desperate appeals from their leaders to meet the heavily armed foe. The preparatory period had been wasted, the opportune moment lost. In the end only a small vanguard and a scattering of the masses mounted a heroic attempt to block the coup. It was too little and too late. Torres fled, taking refuge August 22 in the Peruvian embassy.

Once in power, Banzer began a murderous repression of the revolutionary organizations. Yet, needing time to consolidate his regime, he deferred attempting to smash the trade union movement.

Despite his repressive measures, Banzer did not succeed in stabilizing class relations in Bolivia. A reflection of unresolved differences in the ruling class is to be seen in the unstable unity of the Falange and the MNR, both of which were included in the regime.⁵⁷ The continued development of rifts has been registered in jockeying between "right" and "left" figures in the governmental apparatus.

The working-class vanguard suffered a heavy defeat; it is demoralized and above all confused. Nevertheless, the class struggle in Bolivia remains explosive. The ruling class is incapa-

ble of alleviating Bolivia's permanent socioeconomic crisis in any substantial way; it is incapable of establishing a genuine fascist regime by mobilizing the petty bourgeoisie; and it is incapable of setting up a durable reformist regime that could gain broad mass support.

The working class, beginning again with immediate demands, can be counted on to resume its struggle for democratic and transitional measures, undermining Banzer as it did Barrientos and Ovando.

2. A Disorienting Line

The "Resolution on Latin America" passed at the Ninth World Congress held that the national bourgeoisie in Latin America is "intrinsically incapable of the least independent action in either the economic or political fields." This is a gross overstatement, as the events in Bolivia have shown.

It is true that the national bourgeoisie is incapable of putting up a consistent struggle against imperialism and that it will in the last analysis never break its partnership with imperialism. It is also true that the national bourgeoisie is incapable of granting any major lasting concessions to the masses. But the national bourgeoisie nonetheless does have a certain room for maneuver both with imperialism and with the masses, depending on conjunctural developments in the class struggle.

The overstatement on the limitations facing the national bourgeoisie fitted in logically with the conviction of the majority comrades that in Bolivia—particularly in *Bolivia*—it was excluded that any but repressive regimes could come to power. This view disoriented the Bolivian section of the Fourth International. The leadership there saw no essential differences between the Barrientos and Ovando regimes. Even the Torres regime—at least in the beginning—appeared to them to be much the same. After all, that was the line adopted by the majority at the Ninth World Congress.

The leading comrades of the majority in Europe clung to the line in a similar way. Comrade Maitan, for instance, could discern no substantial difference between the regimes of Barrientos and Ovando in Bolivia: "And no one can close his eyes to the fraudulent character of the Ovando regime, which has done nothing to replace all-out repression with a more selective type, and which is still ready to jail, exile, or even kill those who do not accept the rules of its game."⁵⁸

Comrades Germain and Knoeller made a similar mistake in evaluation of the Torres regime:

As for Bolivia, the first sign of a new rise in mass struggles provoked a coup d'état followed by a bloody armed confrontation. Those who think that because he came to power "with the support of the left" General Torres will prove more "tolerant" have a few disagreeable surprises in store for them, as soon as he has restored the unity of the army, which is his primary aim.⁵⁹

In the case of the Torres regime, the misjudgment was particularly glaring. By way of contrast, let us note the opinion of a comrade who took the minority position, Hugo Blanco:

This same proletariat is showing us that it has not been defeated—far from it. The rise of Torres is the product of terror inspired by the working class. The next weeks and months will be of decisive importance for Bolivia. In view of this it is very sad to see, precisely at this time, valuable revolutionists being pressed to leave for guerrilla war, separating themselves from the worker and student masses that are moving into struggle. It would not be strange, should these masses be defeated, that they will be blamed, or perhaps it will be used to demonstrate "the impossibility of coming to power through the mass movement." If this misfortune occurs, a big share of the guilt will lie with those who took away from the masses a part of their valuable vanguard. As if there were an oversupply of revolutionary cadres to lead the masses in these days!

Thus Leninist work is required not only in Peru, where for the moment we must bide our time, but also in Bolivia and Chile, which are or could be on the verge of armed struggle. . . .

It is correct in Bolivia to discuss the form that armed struggle must take within the process of the mass upsurge, but the best teacher in this is the Bolivia of 1952, which does not recommend taking to the hills, isolating oneself, or anything like that. Work among the peasants as a complement to the movement of the workers and city dwellers generally is one thing; such work will almost surely lead to peasant guerrillas. The guerrillas of the ELN are something quite different, holding as they do a more or less modified Guevarist, but not Leninist, conception.⁶⁰

It might be supposed that Comrade Blanco wrote with the advantage of hindsight. This was not so. He voiced his opinion in a letter from El Frontón dated October 17, 1970. The article by Comrades Germain and Knoeller was dated November 1970.

Torres came to power precisely because the upsurge in the class struggle had split the army. The army could not be reunited without a successful confrontation with the masses; and to

prepare for that, time and consequently concessions to the masses were needed.

Because of the line of the Ninth World Congress, the comrades of the POR (González) failed to see this. Thus they were caught totally unprepared for a reformist interlude and an opening that made broad work possible among the masses on a more or less legal basis.

The comrades of the minority, who had seen that on a world scale the revolutionary struggle was again moving toward the "classical" pattern and that as a result various tactical variations other than rural guerrilla war had to be held open, were not caught by surprise by the developments in Bolivia. Their forecast had received welcome confirmation. They hoped that the comrades of the majority would make the necessary adjustments so that as little as possible would be lost because of the erroneous line.

However, the disorientation was deep. The majority had considered it extremely unlikely that urban mass insurrections would occur, and even if explosions of that kind did happen, they insisted that the main line was to orient toward rural guerrilla war. "The exceptional variant of an explosive crisis involving the breaking up or paralysis of the state apparatus and a mass mobilization so impetuous that it could prevent or neutralize recourse to repression as a decisive measure, cannot be categorically excluded," the resolution on Latin America stated, "but a strategy on a continental scale cannot be based on exceptional phenomena, and in such a case imperialism would very likely intervene militarily (as happened already in the case of Santo Domingo)."⁶¹

A year later, during the Ovando regime, Comrade Maitan hedged this somewhat in calling attention to the danger of not giving more stress to the need for a functioning revolutionary party.

There would also be the danger of forgetting that there are periods when an effort to develop mass work and to create the instruments for this must have absolute priority. For example, it would be absurd in Peru today to rely primarily on preparing a new wave of guerrilla warfare, failing to understand the need for a deepgoing activity of political clarification and to exploit all the possibilities which, despite everything, the new situation offers for stimulating mass movements and establishing links with them. This is also true on a different scale and probably for a markedly shorter period for Bolivia.⁶²

In an article that energetically reaffirmed the orientation toward rural guerrilla warfare such qualifiers concerning the danger of forgetting fundamentals did not carry much weight. Thus although the Bolivian Trotskyists lived through the insurrectionary developments in October 1970 and January 1971, and described them well, they remained as convinced as ever of the correctness of their orientation toward guerrilla warfare in Bolivia. They did not see how this orientation was causing them to miss the boat.

“In October, the struggle between the military chiefs paralyzed the repressive forces of the army; for two days there was a power vacuum, with the governmental palace and the ministries abandoned.” They continued: “At that moment it was necessary to go into the streets with the masses; it was necessary to destroy the *Mirandistas* with direct action and struggle.”⁶³

The POR (González) blamed the Political Command for not having taken advantage of this situation. “The Political Command of the COB did not know how to take advantage of the governmental crisis that was presented in October, and in that sense is guilty of having frittered away the force of the workers and of having cheated them out of a victory.”⁶⁴

In other words, the leadership of the POR (González) saw that a power vacuum had suddenly appeared in Bolivia and that the Political Command had failed to move in to fill that vacuum. In the language of Marxism—the Political Command was guilty of not having utilized those two crucial days to lead the workers’ urban insurrection toward the conquest of power.

This criticism of the Political Command was completely correct. However, some questions arise. In what way had our own comrades been preparing for this turn of events? How did their projections about rural guerrilla warfare fit in with what had actually happened in the class struggle? Instead of joining with the ELN in pursuing rural guerrilla war would it not have been better to engage in patient work in the mass movement during the period of Barrientos and Ovando in order to be in better position to lead the coming urban insurrection to victory? How did the projection of opening a rural guerrilla front in combination with the ELN correspond to the actual pattern of the class struggle, that is, a mass upsurge, a crisis in the ruling class, governmental paralysis, a deep split in the army, and the possibility suddenly placed before the workers of taking power through an urban insurrection?

3. The Problem of Linking Up With the Masses

Disoriented by the adaptation of the majority to the Castroist strategy of guerrilla warfare, our Bolivian comrades failed at each step to work out a correct political line for the unfolding mass movement. Instead they clung to abstract ultraleft formulas.

What was required was a series of transitional demands, developed in a very concrete way, that is, in adjustment with the living dynamics of the class struggle and in harmony with the objective of turning the organizations created by mass struggles toward the central question of power.

The way in which the Torres regime came to power—through the active intervention of the masses against an attempted ultrarightist coup—and above all the way the idea of the Popular Assembly arose out of the struggle itself showed that the Bolivian revolution had reached a critical juncture. The conquest of state power by the proletariat was a realistic possibility. To convert that possibility into a reality required utilizing the advances gained by the insurrectionary mass movement to arm the masses. The crying need was a political program matching the level of consciousness of the masses but proposing that they move ahead without delay to create their own independent class organs and outlining a series of practical steps to be taken along this line.

The workers recognized that they had gained certain democratic rights under Torres. They feared a coup from the right. But this coup was being prepared almost openly. The key, consequently, was to give voice to this legitimate fear by hammering away at the *impending rightist coup* and calling for *armed defense of the democratic rights* won by the workers. Such a campaign would have helped place the reactionary generals on the defensive and would have facilitated work among the rank-and-file troops.

The forming of workers' militias to defend the Popular Assembly and the gains of the masses against a rightist coup was a completely logical extension of this course. However, this had no meaning unless it was coupled with calls for mass mobilizations to bolster the Popular Assembly against any attempts by Torres to limit its free development.

Another requisite, of course, was a correct governmental slogan so as to avoid sowing any illusions in the Torres regime. The orientation would thus be toward the development of dual power,

something that could be done only openly as a process engaged in by the masses themselves.

Our slogan for a workers' and peasants' government had to be concretized and fitted to the situation in Bolivia. Under Ovando, the COB represented the most important mass organization of the workers' movement. Thus the slogan of a COB government was a possibility that ought to have been carefully examined at that time as a realistic way of filling in the abstract formula calling for a workers' and peasants' government.

Under Torres, a higher form of workers' united front arose—the Political Command. It was absolutely essential for the revolutionary party to insist that the Political Command take over governmental power.

When the Political Command developed into the Popular Assembly the correctness of such a demand became even more apparent. The Popular Assembly was a very advanced united-front formation enjoying the full confidence of the working class. The correct moves needed to strengthen it and to make it something more than an *incipient* soviet were to democratize it and to organize local supporting bases for it throughout the country. Popular assemblies in every town! For the election with the right of recall of delegates from all factories, peasant areas, and barracks! For all power to the Popular Assembly!

An energetic effort was called for to expand the influence of the Popular Assembly among the peasantry and above all the army. The revolutionary party should have been in the forefront of such a campaign. Even if it was only propagandistic at first, a drive along this line was essential to help the proletariat break from the reformist leadership that dominated the Popular Assembly in its opening phase.

All this presupposed a clear orientation toward the masses, above all toward the urban workers and the miners.

Even worse than the tragedy of missing a most favorable opportunity for the proletariat to take power was the fact that *no party, including the section of the Fourth International in Bolivia, advanced a correct revolutionary program for the conquest of power.*

The main leadership of the Bolivian proletariat was caught up in reformism; the revolutionary wing, drugged by the "turn" at the Ninth World Congress in favor of the "correct conception" of engaging in technical preparations for rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period on a continental scale, resisted being diverted

by the appearance of "exceptional phenomena" in Bolivia. The strategic line of preparing for and engaging in guerrilla war had already become a crippling sectarian dogma.

4. What Axis for the Struggle for Power?

The reformists, as was to be expected, did not orient at all toward workers' power. They raised no slogans in this direction. Instead they supported Torres. They did everything except prepare the masses for the coming confrontation with the counterrevolution. The Communist Party of Bolivia, committed to Moscow's line of "peaceful coexistence," and the POR (Lora), an affiliate of the Healyite "International Committee," were prime movers in this historic betrayal.⁶⁵

In opposition to them was an ultraleft current committed to guerrilla warfare and the organization of a "Revolutionary Workers' and People's Army." Within this current were to be found the Maoists, the Castroist ELN, and our own comrades of the Bolivian section of the Fourth International.

The comrades of the POR (González), carrying out the line of the Ninth World Congress to the best of their ability, were intensively engaged in preparing technically for rural guerrilla warfare when the October 1970 insurrectionary developments brought Torres to power. Their activities isolated them from the scene of action.

It is very difficult for a small vanguard group to combine preparations for guerrilla warfare with mass work. The reason is simple enough. To carry on in the underground, transporting and stockpiling arms and so on, limits the possibility of the few cadres available taking advantage of the legal or semilegal openings that are crucial for relatively swift expansion of mass work. Comrade González himself recognized this.

To pursue these two tasks at the same time, to combine them, is an extremely difficult thing. Under the Ovando government the party operated in completely clandestine conditions and was totally absorbed in armed work. Since last November, after Torres came to power, we have been able to redevelop our legal work aimed at the unions but also the peasants and the universities, where we had done very little before.⁶⁶

Under "completely clandestine conditions" it is, of course, difficult to make rapid progress in mass work. Nevertheless, it is possible to make *some* progress, as the Bolsheviks demonstrated

in their time and as Trotskyists today are demonstrating in countries like Spain and Brazil. But the POR (González) was engaged in other tasks during the Barrientos and Ovando regimes, and thus it found itself outside the mass movement at the time of the October uprising. As a result our comrades were not present in the united front that led the mass mobilizations and that created the Political Command.

Instead of recognizing their error and attempting to retrieve their position by fighting to participate in the Political Command as a united-front formation backed by the masses, our comrades issued propaganda in favor of tasks and organizational forms separate and apart from the developing class struggle. That is, instead of accepting the organizations created in the process of mass struggles and battling from within against the reformist misleaders, the POR (González) propagandized for alternative organizational forms that, excellent as they may have appeared on paper, were abstract and sectarian under the circumstances. For instance, on October 11, 1970, the Executive Committee of the POR issued a declaration to the masses proposing the following objectives:

a) *Organizing a Revolutionary Command*, including all political tendencies that favor a socialist solution to the country's present situation and support the armed struggle for power. The objective of this command would be to overcome the reformism and economism, the capitulation and class collaborationism that have caused the successive defeats and frustrations of the Bolivian people.

b) *Creating a Revolutionary Workers' and People's Army*. This is the essential instrument for taking power. It will integrate vast popular, worker, and peasant sectors into the armed struggle. In this new army there can be a place for officers and soldiers of the bourgeois armed forces who break from this organization and want to fight in fact to liberate Bolivia from imperialist oppression and extricate it from underdevelopment.

c) *Developing a body representative of the masses*, through which they can express all their revolutionary power, initiative, worries, and determination to transform society.⁶⁷

These three proposals were not connected to the living class struggle. They were not tied in with immediate, democratic, or transitional demands stemming from the actual level of political consciousness of the masses. No explanation was offered on just how the proposed "Revolutionary Command," the "Revolution-

ary Workers' and People's Army," and the "body representative of the masses" were to be organized.

Instead of raising demands aimed at mobilizing the masses through united-front actions that would confront the reformists with unbearable dilemmas, the POR (González) presented a schema of its own that amounted to little more than the guerrilla warfare line presented in propagandistic terms that appeared to bend to the new situation. Instead of calling for rural guerrilla warfare in alliance with the ELN, which was engaged at the moment in the Teoponte adventure, the declaration exhorted the masses to form a "Revolutionary Workers' and People's Army." It exhorted the proguerrilla ultraleftists to form a "Revolutionary Command." And it appealed in general, and therefore to no one, for a "body representative of the masses." The road to such a body lay through the Political Command, but the POR (González) either did not see or rejected that possibility, making a belated turn in this direction only after the Political Command had developed into the Popular Assembly.

The fallacious reasoning of our Bolivian comrades is shown by the following judgment:

The Political Command of the COB demonstrated its lack of understanding of the process. It light-mindedly waxed enthusiastic over the Torres government without seeing its limitations, and demobilized the masses prematurely. Because of this, it is now necessary to form, either from within it or from outside of it, a Revolutionary Political Command, which in light of the previous experience can lead the masses to power and socialism.⁶⁸

Needless to say, such a formation never came into existence. The masses still accepted the leadership of Juan Lechín, the COB, the Communist Party of Bolivia, the POR (Lora) in the established body of the Political Command that had appeared at the head of the mass insurrection. To propose, in a purely propagandistic way, that those who had declared for socialism and guerrilla war should form a "Revolutionary Political Command" of their own in opposition to the existing Political Command meant permitting the reformists to retain control over the masses without putting up a fight against their betrayal.

Even after the January 1971 insurrectionary wave that answered the first serious attempt of the rightist generals to topple the Torres government and that led to the formation of the

Popular Assembly, our Bolivian comrades still maintained an aloof attitude before finally deciding to make a turn.

After visiting Bolivia, two militants of the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International, wrote: "In addition, the revolutionary political parties, in particular the POR-Gonzales, have decided that the Assembly is worth taking seriously. At first they tended to have an attitude of watching the Assembly to see how it turned out, rather than actually participating in it."⁶⁹

Unfortunately, when they finally made the turn, our Bolivian comrades viewed their participation as being limited primarily to speechmaking. This followed from their view that the Popular Assembly was "hardly more than a kind of national parliament" and that eventually it would give way to something more realistic—guerrilla war.

In an interview given in April 1971 and published in the May 17 issue of *Rouge*, Comrade González said:

The left wing, to which the POR belongs, has developed the idea that the People's Assembly should be a body that would discuss national problems and solutions for them but would leave the power in the hands of the mass organizations (unions and popular militia or people's army). . . .

The POR comrades in the People's Assembly, whether they represent the party directly or some union, hold no illusions. They are using the People's Assembly as a forum, as a platform. That is all.⁷⁰

To be noted in particular in this statement of position is Comrade González's opposition to calling for all power to the Popular Assembly. What he proposed instead was to leave the power in the hands of the mass organizations—the unions, popular militia, and a people's army. The list is an odd one; neither a popular militia nor a people's army existed. They had yet to be created. So, for the moment, that left only the unions, that is, the COB. But the COB provided the mass base of the Popular Assembly. And it was precisely the Popular Assembly that constituted a united-front formation through which the workers could draw the peasantry and the urban masses together in a struggle for a concrete form of a workers' and peasants' government.

It is obvious that our Bolivian comrades did not think through the question of the road to power as it was specifically posed by

the actual class struggle at the time. They were suffering under the illusion that they could achieve a quick "breakthrough" by engaging in rural guerrilla war.

They finally did decide to take the Popular Assembly seriously. Under the growing pressure of the mass movement (50,000 workers demonstrated May 1 openly calling for socialism), the POR (González) changed its position and called for the Popular Assembly becoming the basis for a workers' and peasants' government.

In an article in the May 1-15 issue of *Combate*, the POR (González) announced its new view:

The Asamblea Popular can have no role except as an organ of dual power. That is, it must not simply debate and watch over government functions; it must—as the expression of the power of the great masses of our people—decide the basic questions facing the country and the workers. The Asamblea Popular must become a workers' and peasants' government, and we must fight both inside and outside of it to achieve this. In this process, a political-military instrument will grow up alongside the assembly which can serve as the power it still lacks to enforce its decisions.⁷¹

The turn was a welcome one. But it came too late and was still too confused to have effective consequences.

What was the meaning of the "political-military instrument" to "grow up alongside the assembly"? The Popular Assembly could not enforce its decisions without the conquest of power. Transitional slogans and transitional measures were needed, as already indicated above, to arm the masses. These should have been launched in the most vigorous way by our comrades at least six months earlier (when Torres came to power). The continuous talk about a "Revolutionary Workers' and People's Army" to be created by unknown means (rural guerrilla war?) and unspecified leaders (the POR or ELN?) was abstract and therefore sectarian and irrelevant in this fast-moving situation.

5. Arming of the Masses

When the masses take up arms, they do it in two main ways that become more and more combined. The first is the organization by the workers of their own detachments to defend their struggles and bases (union headquarters, etc.) from attack. The most elementary level of this self-organization is the formation of

picket squads, as is well known. The Transitional Program indicates the steps going beyond this level. The second way consists of spreading sympathy for the goals of the revolution among the troops of the bourgeois army and winning them over at the crucial point. The success of both processes depends on a correct political approach, as was demonstrated by the Bolsheviks.

In Bolivia, without a concrete governmental slogan such as calling for power to the Popular Assembly, and without a vigorous campaign to mobilize defensive forces against the impending rightist coup, all talk of armed struggle amounted to nothing but phrasemongering or ultraleft adventurism. A consistent political effort among the ranks and among the lower officers of the army was particularly necessary as part of the process of arming the masses. The army in Bolivia could not be won over simply by propaganda, essential as that was. It was crucially important to openly organize workers' militias to show the rank-and-file soldiers that the workers were in dead earnest about defending their rights and blocking the plots of the ultrarightist generals.

The Popular Assembly voted for a proposal to organize workers' militias clandestinely. This was both absurd and opportunistic. Absurd because what was required in this situation was a highly publicized campaign on the need to form workers' militias openly under the auspices of the mass organizations; opportunist because the real meaning of the motion was that the masses would not be armed. Both the reformists and the ultra-lefts support this motion. The opportunists did so for obvious reasons, including posing before the masses as revolutionists. The ultra-lefts supported it because it fitted in neatly with their "correct conception" of guerrilla warfare, of arming the vanguard in a clandestine way, since at bottom they believe that no other way is possible.

The army cannot be won over except by meeting the masses face to face. The masses had to learn how to do this—how to march to the barracks of the soldiers, how to talk with them, how to appeal to them in the streets in a vigorous way if they were sent out to repress the workers or to disarm a workers' militia unit.

If some quotations are needed on this, Leon Trotsky is a source to be recommended. We have selected some that ought to be all the more convincing to the majority since Trotsky indicates wherein guerrilla war can play a positive role . . . tactically.

The army's political mood, that great unknown of every revolution, can be determined only in the process of a clash between the soldiers and the people. The army's crossing over to the camp of the revolution is a moral process; but it cannot be brought about by moral means alone. Different motives and attitudes combine and intersect within the army; only a minority is consciously revolutionary, while the majority hesitates and awaits an impulse from outside. This majority is capable of laying down its arms or, eventually, of pointing its bayonets at the reaction only if it begins to believe in the possibility of a people's victory. Such a belief is not created by political agitation alone. Only when the soldiers become convinced that the people have come out into the streets for a life-and-death struggle—not to demonstrate against the government but to overthrow it—does it become psychologically possible for them to “cross over to the side of the people.”⁷²

Let us recall that Trotsky is describing the situation in Russia in the 1905 revolution, not the situation in 1917 involving a conscripted army of huge proportions demoralized by defeat in an imperialist war. He was talking about an army that was if anything *more* reactionary than the one in Bolivia. Trotsky continues:

Thus an insurrection is, in essence, not so much a struggle against the army as a struggle *for* the army. The more stubborn, far-reaching, and successful the insurrection, the more probable—indeed inevitable—is a fundamental change in the attitude of the troops. Guerrilla fighting on the basis of a revolutionary strike cannot in itself, as we saw in Moscow, lead to victory. But it creates the possibility of sounding the mood of the army, and after a first important victory—that is, once a part of the garrison has joined the insurrection—the guerrilla struggle can be transformed into a mass struggle in which a part of the troops, supported by the armed and unarmed population, will fight another part, which will find itself in a ring of universal hatred. We have seen in the Black Sea Fleet, in Kronstadt, in Siberia, in the Kuban region, later in Sveaborg and in many other places that when the class, moral, and political heterogeneity of the army causes troops to cross over to the side of the people, this must, in the first instance, mean a struggle between two opposing camps within the army. In all these cases, the most modern weapons of militarism—rifles, machine guns, fortress and field artillery, battle-ships—were found not only in the hands of the government but also in the service of the revolution.⁷³

Trotsky's orientation at that time, as subsequently, was of course not in the direction of guerrilla war for a prolonged period on a continental scale. As Marxism's preeminent figure in

military questions, he understood to perfection that revolutionary work among the troops must be based, if it is to be effective, on mobilizing the masses and bringing them to bear on the army like a powerful solvent.

The line of the POR (González), in contrast, was to encourage individual desertion, that is, to remove from the army any elements that became convinced revolutionists. As we have seen, when Torres came to power, our comrades in seeking to meet the needs of the hour offered members of the bourgeois army, if they decided to desert, a welcome in the nonexistent Revolutionary Workers' and People's Army: "In this new army there can be a place for officers and soldiers of the bourgeois armed forces who break from this organization and want to fight in fact to liberate Bolivia from imperialist oppression and extricate it from underdevelopment."⁷⁴ The appeal for individual desertions followed automatically from the schema of rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period on a continental scale.

What was required, however, was a set of demands around which the most militant rank-and-file soldiers could begin the work of polarizing the ranks against the officer caste. This was certainly feasible in view of the conditions in the army during the Torres regime.

The absence of an effective policy aimed at taking advantage of the divisions within the army and winning over a sector of the ranks and the lower officers was one of the most serious weaknesses displayed by the leadership of the Bolivian section of the Fourth International. The "turn" at the Ninth World Congress had diverted them from preparing for armed struggle in accordance with the model set by Lenin and Trotsky in the Russian revolution.

6. After Torres Comes Guerrilla War

In spite of the course of the class struggle in Bolivia the POR (González) held stubbornly to its position that a socialist revolution would occur only via rural guerrilla warfare. Disregarding all the evidence before their eyes, our Bolivian comrades remained steadfast supporters of the line adopted at the Ninth World Congress, a line that had ruled out almost everything happening around them (an urban insurrection, a reformist regime, open trade union work, the possibility of legal preparations, work in the armed forces, etc.).

Was it a "death wish," as Comrades Germain and Knoeller

might put it, that led to such persistence in sticking with an erroneous line? No, they simply still had confidence in the wisdom of the majority leaders of the Fourth International. As they visualized the coming sequence, Torres would fall and then would come the real struggle for power, that is, rural guerrilla warfare on a new and higher plane, since the successor to Torres would be the most brutal dictator yet seen in the country. This was their real perspective. That was why they were so preoccupied with building some kind of military apparatus separate and apart from the mass organizations. That was also why they persisted so arduously in trying to create a united front with the other groups committed to the schema of guerrilla war—the ELN, the Maoists, and the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria.⁷⁵

In his interview with the correspondent of *Rouge*, Comrade González, in explaining the work they were accomplishing, said the following:

But obviously this work cannot be capitalized on, or have any meaning in the long run, except in the context of preparing our organization for armed struggle. In the present unstable situation we look on everything as temporary. The repression that is to come will signal the start of a new stage of armed struggle on a scale previously unknown here.⁷⁶

In an interview with two militants of the IMG, Comrade González explained quite correctly why the bourgeoisie required a rightist coup. He went on: “. . . if there was a coup now, it would be a military victory for the right and the army. But this would not allow it to do more than control certain cities. It would re-establish the armed struggle at a much higher level than in the period of the guerrillas of the Nancahuazu and Teoponte.”⁷⁷

Continuing the same line of thought further on, Comrade González said:

If the arming of the workers is not organised, if the popular army does not develop, we think that the coup will easily be able to re-establish the army's control. But this control will not last. That situation will be the opening of the war. We don't think in terms of any fixed model. It will be a civil war on a national scale with different fronts. It will be the beginning of a long war for which we are now preparing.⁷⁸

The opinion of Comrade González thus was that after the relationship of class forces had shifted to the decided disadvantage of the working class, after the bourgeoisie had succeeded in

reuniting the army and had opened a savage repression of the vanguard, and the masses had been driven back and demobilized, then the armed struggle could begin in earnest.

This total misjudgment of what would happen after the downfall of Torres at the hands of the Bolivian Kornilov followed logically from the series of misjudgments made earlier that had caused our Bolivian comrades to miss the boat.⁷⁹ They were not alone in committing such colossal errors. The majority leaders elsewhere shared responsibility. After all, according to their theory, the events preceding Banzer's triumph constituted an "exceptional variant." What was permanent was the schema of rural guerrilla war for a prolonged period on a continental scale, including Bolivia.

In the final days of the Torres regime, our Bolivian comrades fought valiantly against the counterrevolutionary coup d'état, suffering heavy casualties, including deaths. The world Trotskyist movement honors them for this and will always remember those who gave up their lives.

Nevertheless, together with the Bolivian proletariat as a whole, they suffered a heavy defeat. Their ranks were decimated. Years of hard work were undone. Some of the comrades became demoralized. Bitter dissension and recriminations broke out. All this must be borne in mind in assessing the enormous difficulties now facing our Bolivian section.

But this is all the more reason for speaking out on the disastrous line to which they were committed. To remain silent or to blunt the political criticisms that must be made would mean that our Bolivian martyrs really died in vain. The need to criticize that line has become all the more imperious in view of the fact that it is still being followed in Bolivia.

In fact, little has changed. Under Barrientos, the POR (González) was for guerrilla action rather than concentrating on working in the mass movement. The most serious setbacks, including the disaster suffered by Che Guevara, did not alter their determination. It was the same under Ovando. Under Torres they made some adjustments; but no real turn was involved. The adjustments were intended only to lay a basis for guerrilla warfare when the mass mobilizations came to an end. Today under Banzer they are continuing—with one significant exception—as if the entire previous experience meant exactly nothing.

7. The Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Front

The exception is the following. Under the Torres regime, our comrades clung stubbornly to the sectarian position of not participating in the Political Command and of keeping away from the Popular Assembly until it was too late to significantly affect its course. They did this although the Political Command and the Popular Assembly were united-front formations based on mass support. Now, after the downfall of Torres and after the dispersal of the Popular Assembly, they have joined the very leaders who were at the head of the Political Command and the Popular Assembly and who were responsible for betraying the Bolivian revolution by following a reformist course. They joined with these despicable figures in the "Frente Revolucionario Antiimperialista" under a *common bourgeois program*.⁸⁰ In the beginning the FRA even included General Torres!

It is true that after the United Secretariat of the Fourth International publicly criticized the Bolivian section for adding the signature of the POR (González) to the manifesto of the FRA calling for a "popular and national government," our comrades responded with a self-critical statement in which they said, among other things:

Having arisen after the coup of August 21 [1971], the FRA, which includes all the political and mass organizations against the fascism of Banzer, the manifesto of the month of December 1971 is an unclear document that does not clearly delimit the tasks of the Bolivian revolutionaries and leaves the impression that it admits forms of government of national unity. The POR does not accept such a formulation contrary to its concepts of a socialist dynamics of the revolution and of a worker-peasant government.

The signing of such a document without publishing at the same time its criticisms and formulated delimitations, was an error for which we criticize ourselves.⁸¹

The participation of the POR in the FRA, they continued, was merely a question of tactics:

The POR in remaining in the FRA delimits itself from the reformists and ratifies its strategy of armed struggle and revolutionary war to overthrow fascism, destroy the capitalist regime, and build the socialist society under the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this sense its

participation in the FRA has a tactical character under present conditions of the Bolivian left and does not compromise its political, organic, or military independence.⁸²

In the same statement, the “collective leadership” promised to make public its differences with the FRA:

The POR through a public document will delimit its political and programmatic concepts and bring out a clarification on the responsibilities of the parties in the August events and will unmask the tendencies guilty of the defeat of the masses. In participating in the FRA, it will not yield to it its revolutionary duty before the masses.⁸³

As yet we have not seen the promised public delimitation from the reformist betrayers and bourgeois lickspittles gathered together in the FRA. Meanwhile our comrades remain comfortably in bed with them, for “tactical” reasons.

The main role of the FRA is to cover up the betrayal of the Bolivian revolution committed by the reformist parties under Torres. In the name of “unity” this fraudulent front seeks to silence any criticism by branding it as “sectarianism” so as to be in position to mislead the masses once again under the same disastrous program that was supported by the Communist Party of Bolivia and the POR (Lora).

In March 1972 the FRA laid down certain rules and regulations that are binding on those belonging to it. These bylaws make instructive reading:

1. No political organization or party may go against the fundamental line established in the fundamental founding documents of the FRA subscribed to by the representatives of the different groups belonging to it.

2. The political parties retain their ideological and organizational independence but their conduct is bound by the agreements they have endorsed.

3. The FRA shall act as a single entity in all areas of social life (trade unions, universities, high schools, popular organizations, etc.). In elections of any kind, the Front will present common slates after fully discussing them internally.

4. A trade union and student commission will be set up to take charge of coordinating trade union and university student work. The highest political-union-student commission constitutes the leadership of the FRA, and the political parties and organizations must subordinate themselves to it in executing the line determined by the Front.

5. In trade union, university student, and other type assemblies, the FRA will present a previously studied and agreed upon line, and it is recommended that its official speakers be assigned beforehand.

6. Those voicing the FRA's propaganda must present its common views and not solely the partial line of one or some of its components.⁸⁴

These rules and regulations are clearly intended to bottle up critical views that may be held by one or another of the components of the FRA. To remain in such a front means participating in an unprincipled political bloc with reformist betrayers of the revolution and tying the revolutionary party hand and foot.

Instead of joining in a bloc with Juan Lechín, the Communist Party of Bolivia, the POR (Lora), and other political riffraff, our comrades should be doing their utmost to expose how and why these figures and groupings betrayed the Bolivian revolution. This is an absolute requisite in starting from the beginning again in Bolivia and assembling the cadres required to build a revolutionary party capable of presenting a viable alternative to the program of the reformists.

Yet it is understandable—if not excusable—why our Bolivian comrades decided to practice entryism *sui generis* in the FRA. The logic of the guerrilla war orientation adopted by the majority at the Ninth World Congress has led them to subordinate political considerations to what they deem to be the prime necessity—technical preparations for rural guerrilla warfare. They are participating in the unprincipled front regardless of its political coloration and regardless of its ideological gag rule because they think the FRA badge can prove helpful in launching “armed struggle.”

In addition, they are affected by the current mood in the Bolivian vanguard favoring “unity” at any cost. This mood is a reaction to the petty, pointless bickerings of the reformists as they jockeyed for favor with Torres and for influence over the masses.

To bow to this mood is extremely dangerous, for it stands in the way of building a clear-thinking and clear-speaking Leninist-type party capable of using the method outlined in the Transitional Program to reach the Bolivian masses.

Instead of the first rule of the FRA's bylaws, stating that “no political organization or party may go against the fundamental line established in the fundamental founding documents” of that unprincipled front, our Bolivian comrades should establish as

their first rule to at once go against that fundamental line. The Bolivian section must break out of the straitjacket and bring its own line to the masses through serious, persistent, daily work among the proletariat, the students, the peasants, and the poverty-stricken layers in the towns and cities. Its attitude toward the FRA should be to confront it with dilemmas that will ultimately break it up politically, that is, through united-front proposals on specific issues.

New mass struggles will inevitably erupt again in Bolivia—perhaps sooner than may be expected. But to win a position of leadership in these struggles, our comrades must become deeply rooted in the masses. They must turn away definitively from the Guevaraist guerrilla war “strategy” that has proved to be such a deadly trap for the Latin American revolutionary movement. “Technical” considerations must be subordinated—but really subordinated—to the political necessity of gaining leadership in the mass struggle.

This means a policy—for a “prolonged period” and on a “continental scale”—of avoiding actions that lead to the needless sacrifice of the lives of cadres and that provide the counterrevolution with convenient pretexts for savage reprisals. This means reversing the line of the Ninth World Congress calling for a guerrilla “strategy” in Latin America. It means, in short, returning to the Leninist strategy of party building.

III. The Lesson of Argentina

Since May 1969 the situation in Argentina has been prerevolutionary.

In that month the country was shaken by mass struggles touched off by student protests. A general strike paralyzed Rosario, Argentina's second largest city. Major flare-ups followed in various cities, the biggest and most violent being in Córdoba, hence the name *Cordobazo* for this historic struggle. The two big trade union federations called a nationwide solidarity strike. This widespread upsurge in May amounted to a semi-insurrection.

The use of the term *semi-insurrection* rather than *spontaneous rebellion* or *uprising* is deliberate. It accurately indicates the nature of the struggle—in the streets, with masses confronting the army and police; and the target the masses had in mind—the national government. What gave it the character of a semi-insurrection was the clear political aim of the mobilizations and confrontations—to bring down the government.

That is the profound difference from the uprisings in the Black ghettos in the United States, which were spontaneous rebellions, with no specific political demands either explicit or implicit.

But even the Argentine explosions were not insurrections. For that, a revolutionary leadership applying a clear program for the conquest of power was required. None of the mobilizations of the working class in Argentina has had this feature.

We have characterized the situation in Argentina since May 1969 as "prerevolutionary" for various reasons:

1. The confusion in government circles, and the bourgeois forces generally, has grown more and more intense as they flounder about, trying to find a way out of the critical economic situation and trying to derail or break the back of the rising mass movement.

2. The petty bourgeoisie is losing all confidence in the capitalist system, and significant sectors are inclining toward revolutionary or prosocialist positions.

3. The working class wants a revolutionary change in the government. It has lost all confidence in the government as the

various regimes have succeeded each other, without ameliorating but only worsening the crisis racking the country.

It is true that the bulk of the working class still has confidence in Peronism politically. But that is because they believe, mistakenly, that through Peronism a means can be found to change the system. In other words, they are still not aware that the Peronist party is bourgeois. This is one of the consequences of the denial of Perón's democratic rights and his exile from the country for seventeen years.

The main obstacles blocking the workers from moving toward state power in the present situation consist of the bureaucratic leadership of the trade unions, the only existing mass organizations of the proletariat, and General Perón, the unquestioned leader of the toiling masses.

The great problem facing the Argentine revolutionary movement is how to transform the prerevolutionary situation into a revolutionary one, that is, into a direct struggle for power.

1. Turn of the Tide

The bourgeois parliamentary regime established after the downfall of Perón in 1955 came to an end in 1966 with a military coup d'état that put General Juan Carlos Onganía in power.⁸⁵ The coup reflected a passing downturn in the class struggle. The penetration of U.S. imperialism took a leap ahead, expanding into new sectors such as banking.

Onganía lined up with the Brazilian dictatorship in the worldwide crusade against communism. While he did not set up special courts, or alter the traditional judicial structure in general, preferring to give his regime a "legal" façade, he forced through repressive measures against the working class on both the economic and political levels. But he did not dare attempt to dissolve the trade unions or the rank-and-file structure of the factory committees. Such an attempt had been made a decade before without success. The unions continued as clandestine organizations until the bourgeois regime recognized its defeat and legalized the unions in the late fifties. Onganía's attempt at personal Bonapartistic rule, which he had promised would last ten years, was terminated by the events of May 1969.

The uprisings in Rosario and Córdoba altered the relationship of class forces. The retreat of the working class came to an end. Already significant efforts had been made to fight back, but these had been defeated. Now the working class began to take the

offensive. The masses, in various stages, dealt a series of blows to successive bourgeois regimes, gaining concessions in the process.

The ruling class has oscillated between repression and concessions. This maneuvering, however, has necessarily been confined within the limits of the general crisis that has racked Argentina. The country's semicolonial standing has not enabled the bourgeoisie to grant significant concessions except for the period immediately following World War II. The concessions that have been granted, whether of a minimal economic nature or more typically in the field of democratic rights, have only served to encourage the workers and to lead them to broaden their offensive.

The first semi-insurrections were met with a selective repression. During the whole period since 1966, the ruling class has not carried out a single massacre of the mass movement. While accurate figures are not available, it may well be that there were more casualties in the October 1968 massacre in Mexico City than in all six years of military rule in Argentina, in which a series of mass uprisings occurred. This is not because the Argentine ruling class is any less brutal or bloodthirsty than the Mexican ruling class, but because they understand the explosiveness of the class struggle and the inherent power of the proletariat in Argentina.

Bending with the pressure of the first Cordobazo, the government promised a relaxation of the repression. Once it felt that the situation was somewhat safe, the government disregarded its promise and resumed its hard line. The response from the workers was a resumption of mass actions, paralyzing strikes hitting the cities and sometimes extending to a provincial and national level. In various minor cities, general strikes were accompanied by militant street demonstrations. (It should be noted, however, that mass demonstrations in the streets with the setting up of barricades and clashes with the police have not occurred in a similar way in Buenos Aires with its population of 8,000,000. Rosario and Córdoba, the second and third largest cities, where the demonstrations made world headlines, have populations of only 672,000 and 589,000 respectively.)

The slowly ascending line of mass struggles was registered in several alterations of the cabinet. The ruling class felt compelled to shift its orientation under the Onganía dictatorship, finally removing the general himself in a coup d'état in June 1970. His replacement, General Roberto Marcelo Levingston, was in turn

ousted in a coup nine days after the second Cordobazo in March 1971.

Each change of government marked an attempt to avoid a direct confrontation with the masses and to divert them away from street struggles pointing in the direction of an insurrectionary general strike on a national scale. The diversionary attempts have consisted of offers to provide legal, but relatively harmless, outlets for the expression of discontent. General Alejandro Lanusse, who replaced Levingston in March 1971, followed up logically by calling for a return to a parliamentary regime.⁸⁶

This turn represents an effort by the military caste to maintain unity in their own ranks, establish a solid ruling-class front, help the trade union bureaucracy divert the masses, and gain time so as to be in a better position to crush the workers' movement at an opportune moment. The idea is to involve the masses once again in the swindle of bourgeois parliamentarism. For this, they require the good offices of the Peronist movement and its leader, the only bourgeois figure with any popularity among the masses. The plan, however, cannot be delayed too long. Two general strikes have served to remind the ruling class of that.

Within the general intensification of the class struggle, a dip occurred in actions by the industrial working class beginning at the end of 1971. This can be ascribed to the scheduling of parliamentary elections and the role of the union bureaucracy. No militant left-wing leadership exists in the unions on a scale sufficient to offer an effective challenge to this political game. But in 1972 new popular uprisings broke out (Mendoza, Tucumán, the city of General Roca). These forced the Peronist movement to adopt a more independent stance, affecting Lanusse's Gran Acuerdo Nacional (GAN), the bourgeois class front.⁸⁷ Moreover, the continued radicalization, drawing in ever broader layers of the unorganized workers, the white-collar workers, and the lower petty bourgeoisie, has helped keep the ruling class on the defensive.

2. The Labor Movement

Although the modern Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT) came into existence in the 1930s in a series of strikes led by the Communist Party, it was not until the rise of the Peronist movement that industrial unions became established.⁸⁸ This was the period, too, when the *cuerpos de delegados* (delegate bodies)

and the *comisiones internas* (internal commissions) were established as the basic structure of the unions. The *cuero de delegados* is a factory committee elected either by sectors of each factory or at large. The *comisión interna* is a steering committee usually elected by the *cuero de delegados*, but sometimes by direct vote.

While these positive developments marked the rise of one of the most powerfully organized working-class structures in the world, a conservative bureaucracy, linked to the state under Perón, became deeply entrenched. The contradiction between a militant rank and file and a bureaucracy serving as an agency of the ruling class is the central feature of the Argentine labor movement.

With the overthrow of Perón in 1955, the government dissolved the unions. By then, however, the CGT had brought 90 percent of the organized workers within a single union structure.

The resistance to the government centered in the *cueros de delegados* and the *comisiones internas*. The new regime found it impossible to crush this powerful base of the union movement. The exiled Perón ordered his movement to turn to terrorism. A wave of bombings and other terrorist actions, unparalleled in the history of Latin America, swept the country. Yet these were unable to change the course of the government in any meaningful way. On the other hand, the continuous strikes led by the factory committees did have an effect, compelling the government to retreat. Finding it impossible to repress the working class at a plant level, the ruling class decided to legalize the top structure of the union movement in hope of utilizing the bureaucracy as a means of containing the factory committees and checking the general militancy of the masses. A special measure, the "Ley de Asociaciones Profesionales," was decreed, recognizing the trade union structure but designed to place the unions under government control.

The key to Argentine politics in the recent period is similar to that in Bolivia up to Banzer's coup d'état. The scheme of subjecting the mass movement to direct control through dictatorial regimes failed; the ruling class has been compelled to try more subtle methods.

In 1968 a rift in the ranks of the bourgeoisie resulted in a move to oust Onganía through a coup. This was backed by two major political parties, the Peronists and the Radicals.⁸⁹ But the workers were still marking time and the top bureaucrats around Vandor, the central leader of the CGT, while still calling them-

selves Peronists, were “participating” with the Onganía dictatorship. The differences led to a split in the CGT. The major industrial unions—textiles, auto, construction, meat, light and power, etc.—followed Vandor. Less powerful unions followed Ongaro, who formed the “CGT of the Argentines.”⁹⁰

The projected coup never materialized, and the unions associated with the CGT(A) began drifting back into the CGT until Ongaro was left with but a few very small unions—printers, pharmaceutical, etc. Finally, in 1971, Ongaro himself returned to the fold of the CGT, once again uniting the entire trade union movement in Argentina.

3. The Gathering Storm

Before the Cordobazo, the class struggle mounted gradually, yet with strike after strike ending in defeat. For instance, in September 1968 the workers in the largest oil refinery in the Greater Buenos Aires area struck for fifty days in a defensive action against worsening conditions, only to lose.

In January 1969 another militant strike in the important *Fábrica Financiera* printing plant lasted three months, to be betrayed finally by the bureaucracy. In February the Citroen auto workers struck in solidarity with twelve workers who had been fired from the plant. They were leaders of the *comisión interna*, one of them being a highly respected proletarian leader and member of the Central Committee of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (*La Verdad*). The pickets included armed squads. In a scuffle, one of the most hated representatives of the bosses was mortally wounded. The bureaucracy of the auto union SMATA (Sindicato de Mecánicos y Afines del Transporte Automotor del Automóvil) used this incident to impose a halt of twenty days in the strike. This broke morale and the bureaucracy followed up to consolidate its grip on the Citroen plant.

In the interior of Argentina, especially in the northern sector, a series of militant struggles took place before the upsurge of May 1969. These were caused in part by the bad situation in the sugar industry and the general economic blight in that region. The most important struggles broke out in Villa Ocampo and Villa Quinteros. In the latter city, a peaceful mass demonstration was brutally repressed by the police. The masses responded by building barricades in the streets. The government cracked down with a general repression of the entire population.

In Córdoba a series of struggles flared up on the eve of the May

events. On February 24 the metalworkers voted to call a strike. Four days later, the workers of Luz y Fuerza (light and power) held assemblies. The struggles in this period were occasionally accompanied by marches. In the following month all the metalworkers went on strike, and in April the teachers began to mobilize, voting for a plan of struggle.

4. The Rosariazo and the Cordobazo

Turmoil broke out on the University of Corrientes campus on May 11. The issue was an arbitrary boost in prices at the student cafeteria. On May 15 the police killed a student. The campus uproar spread to Rosario on May 16. Two days later the police killed another youth.

The workers responded to the appeals of the students and staged a solidarity strike. The CGT bureaucrats, sensing the rising tide, gave their endorsement to the strike. On May 21 the police killed a young metalworker. This led to street demonstrations and confrontations with the police. Barricades went up, and the masses, in a completely spontaneous manner, took over an area of twenty blocks.

Under the impact of what had happened in Rosario, Córdoba exploded.

Mass discontent had been building toward such an outcome in this powerful proletarian center, the seat of Argentina's auto and aviation industries. On May 5, the transport and metalworkers went out on strike. As a show of solidarity the CGT of Córdoba voted a twenty-four-hour general sympathy strike. This resulted in a confrontation with the police on May 14 in which a worker was wounded.

The students now stepped forward. Aroused by the events in Corrientes and enthused by the action of the workers, they organized a march. This was repressed. The medical students answered the police by organizing resistance in their own district. A week of struggle was then voted by the students. In face of the mounting tension, the police arrested Tosco, the leader of the light and power union. High school students began showing up at demonstrations organized by the university students. The Catholic university students joined in the struggle, and student demonstrations spread beyond Rosario and Córdoba to Tucumán and other cities.

Disregarding the wishes of the CGT bureaucrats, factory

committees began to call for a general strike. The students declared full support for the action.

On May 30 and May 31, a thirty-six-hour general strike paralyzed Córdoba. It went through three stages:

1. With the rate of absenteeism in the main plants running at 98 percent, the workers marched to the center of the city. The police threw all their forces into the streets in a showdown fight. The battle swept over a large area and involved thousands of workers and students.

Besides throwing rocks and other missiles against the police, the workers and students began using Molotov cocktails. A small number of sharpshooters harassed the police from the tops of buildings.

The outcome was a defeat for the police. This marked the high point of the semi-insurrection.

2. The army entered the city at 5 p.m. The troops occupied key points and then spread out. Proceeding on foot, and firing at roofs, the troops drove back the demonstrating workers and students, regaining buildings they had occupied.

The workers and students retreated to their barrios (neighborhoods where they lived).

3. During the night several police stations were attacked and set on fire. Such actions continued the next day on a wide scale. Worker-student committees began to appear. They discussed how to resist the army and how to organize and coordinate the movement from the barrios. Propaganda began to be directed to the troops. A significant slogan was "Soldiers, you are our brothers. Don't shoot."

The army managed to extend its control. Troops using guns seized the union headquarters of the light and power workers and the metalworkers. Three prominent union leaders, Agustín Tosco, Ramón Contreras, and Elpidio Torres, were arrested.

The Córdoba magazine *Jerónimo* estimated the total casualties during the two days of fighting at 6 killed, 51 wounded, and 300 arrested. Fifteen to twenty large business establishments were heavily damaged and about sixty automobiles were burned.

The Cordobazo marked the opening of a new rise in the class struggle. When the government decided to hand out harsh sentences to those arrested in the Cordobazo and to clamp down on the unions, the masses responded with a day of national protest, June 30, 1969. On that same day, Vandor, a reactionary leader of the CGT, was assassinated. The identity of the killer

and the reason for his action are still not known.

The government tried to utilize the assassination as a pretext for stepping up repressive measures against the workers. The answer to this was a nationwide general strike of forty-eight hours at the end of August. In some areas, struggles continued to mount until well into September. By the end of the year, the government pulled back, altering the cabinet and releasing the prisoners arrested during the Cordobazo.

The government alternated between token concessions and repressive measures, creating the conditions for a second series of explosions later.

5. Leftist Challenge to the CGT Bureaucracy

The semi-insurrections in Rosario and Córdoba changed the attitude of the Left toward the workers. The student movement, especially, became "worker-oriented." The turn included not only the reformist currents but the ultralefts. The student enthusiasm for the workers was particularly noticeable in Córdoba. The Partido Comunista Revolucionario, a leftist splitoff from the Communist Party, and the Maoist Communist Vanguard gained influence in key unions in Córdoba.⁹¹ They played an important role in the development of two unions that broke away from the class-collaborationist bureaucracy, SITRAC and SITRAM (the unions in two auto plants, Sindicato de los Trabajadores de Concord and Sindicato de los Trabajadores de Materfer).

In the first stage of the development of the antibureaucratic current, that is, at the end of 1969 and beginning of 1970, the bureaucracy succeeded in blocking the challenge to its leadership. This was occasionally done in collusion with the bosses. A case in point was the Chocón strike.

During the building of a dam in the province of Neuquen, three antibureaucratic leaders, Olivari, Alac, and Torres, who had been elected in the local construction workers' union, were fired from the job with the complicity of the bureaucracy. The workers, almost 3,000 strong, staged a solidarity strike. They built barricades and threatened to use dynamite if the police were brought in. They held out for twenty days before being compelled to acknowledge defeat. The three delegates, two of them members of the Communist Party, were arrested.

In union elections, some significant battles were launched against the bureaucrats. In Avellaneda, for instance, the Blue slate, a combination of young militants and an old oppositionist

group in the metalworkers' union, offered a challenge but failed to win.

In the capital city of Buenos Aires, two opposition slates appeared in the metalworkers' union. One, the Rose slate, was backed by the CP and the PRT (*La Verdad*) fractions; the other by left Peronists. Both of the opposition slates were subjected to some crude bureaucratic maneuvering and had to withdraw.

The commercial workers in the capital gave an opposition slate backed by the PRT (*La Verdad*) 2,000 votes to the bureaucracy's 4,000.

Among the bank workers, an oppositionist slate won the majority of the vote, but with the help of the police the bureaucracy stole the election.

In the auto industry, a PRT (*La Verdad*) trade union tendency with leaders in the Peugeot, Citroen, Mercedes Benz, and Chrysler plants, joined with a Peronist rank-and-file opposition led by Pérez, who has backing in the Ford, DECA, and Filtros Fram, and a leader in the Peugeot plant affiliated to the Posadas group. The bureaucracy, fearing possible defeat, barred the slate from running.

These examples are sufficient to indicate the trend in the aftermath of the Cordobazo, that is, the appearance of oppositionist groups in the unions that moved toward a class-struggle line but were still too weak to inflict defeats on the bureaucracy. The trend favored the growth of these currents.

The rise in the class struggle also affected the guerrilla groups. At that time the most prominent were those adhering to Peronism. They stepped up their activities. It also affected the PRT (*Combatiente*). They terminated their plans for rural guerrilla warfare for the time being and turned their attention to urban guerrilla warfare.

During 1970, the best-known guerrilla group was the Montoneros. They kidnapped and assassinated Aramburu, a former president of Argentina.⁹² On July 1, 1970, the Montoneros took over the small town of La Calera in the province of Córdoba.

On July 30, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias, another Peronist guerrilla group, occupied the town of Garín, a suburb of Buenos Aires. The Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP—Revolutionary Army of the People), which appeared in July 1970 under the sponsorship of the PRT (*Combatiente*), moved into prominence during 1971.

6. Rise of a Militant Opposition

By mid-1970 significant headway was being made against the trade union bureaucracy. This trend grew until nearly the end of 1971.

In August 1970 the construction union involved in the Chocón strike held new elections. The opposition won easily.

In San Lorenzo, near Rosario, a class-struggle current set up an Interunion grouping that organized a general strike. Among other demands, it called for the release of political prisoners.

In La Plata, just outside of Buenos Aires, an oppositionist current began gaining headway in the textile plant Petroquímica in 1970. The management in this plant sought to fire some of the activists in the *comisión interna* and the *cuero de delegados*. This precipitated a strike that was won. In 1971 at the end of an obligatory "cooling off" period, the company fired 105 workers, including the activists. This was answered by a strike that lasted sixty-seven days. The 1,100 workers won an increase of 50 percent in their pay, but by a government decision 74 workers were fired, including the activists of the *comisión interna* and the *cuero de delegados*. Within eight months, the class-struggle current was again able to wield considerable influence in these bodies.

As part of the leadership of the Petroquímica strike, the PRT (*La Verdad*) played an important role. All the tendencies of the far left united in defense of this critical strike. The ERP and the FAR, for instance, donated funds.

Auto: In the auto industry, the class-struggle tendency began to make considerable headway in Buenos Aires. In FAE (700 workers), the opposition headed by Pérez, a Peronist, was able—with the help that the PRT (*La Verdad*) tendency was able to mobilize in other auto plants—to win an important strike that had been provoked by the bosses.

The traditionally conservative Mercedes Benz plant (3,000 workers) began to shift to the left. At Chrysler (1,500 workers) and Citroen (1,100 workers), the current led by the PRT (*La Verdad*) gained considerably in strength.

Instead of negotiating a contract for the entire industry, the auto bureaucracy negotiates plant by plant. In opposition to this tradition, the PRT (*La Verdad*) tried to foster resistance in at least some of the plants against this one-at-a-time policy. It was in battling against the workers' efforts to achieve united action that the bosses provoked the Chrysler strike.

Although the strike was organized in model form, having a daily strike bulletin, regular picketing, and mass assemblies in reaching decisions, the workers were unable to win. They held out for fifteen days before having to concede. Some of the best militants in the plant were fired, including many PRT (*La Verdad*) workers.

This defeat left the opposition in the Buenos Aires auto plants too weak to offer SITRAC-SITRAM effective support when they later came under attack.

Encouraged by the results of the Chrysler strike, the bosses decided to try similar tactics at Citroen. They fired class-struggle leaders. The resulting strike was again led by the PRT (*La Verdad*). This time the workers were able to beat off the attack and stop the offensive of the bosses in the auto industry in Buenos Aires.

Bank Workers: One of the most important victories of the rising new workers' vanguard was among the bank workers, traditionally a very militant sector, with 6,500 workers in the head office of the Banco de la Nación Argentina, and 2,500 in its branches in the city and its suburbs. After a series of battles, a class-struggle current began to play a leading role in the *comisiones internas* and *cuerpos de delegados*. The strength of the PRT (*La Verdad*) in this union is recognized by the entire Left in Argentina. An indication of the esteem in which the PRT (*La Verdad*) comrades are held was provided by the response in February 1972 to the attempted beating of a PRT (*La Verdad*) leader in the Banco de la Nación. The 6,000 workers staged a one-hour protest strike.

In Buenos Aires the workers at the Banco de la Nación have played a vanguard role since the latter part of 1970.

Telephone Workers: Unlike the bank workers, who were relatively quiescent after suffering a bitter defeat in 1959, the telephone workers, organized in the Federación de Obreros y Empleados Telefónicos de la República Argentina played an active role within the left wing of the Peronist movement under their main leader, Guillán.

In the September 1971 elections, various oppositionist groups formed a combination called the Frente Clasista de Renovación Telefónica (Class Struggle Front for the Renovation of the Telephone Union), which ran candidates on the Rose slate. Guillán's Brown slate won with the backing of the Communist Party. A right-wing slate won 1,000 votes, the Rose slate only 800.

SITRAC-SITRAM: Of all the class-struggle currents that devel-

oped, the most important was in Córdoba at the two Fiat plants represented by SITRAC and SITRAM.

Many of the technical workers in these two plants have had a university education. Consequently the radicalization that took place on the campus finds its reflection in the ranks of the unions. Two currents were especially strong in the student movement in Córdoba, the PCR and the Maoist Vanguardia Comunista. Their ultraleft and sectarian influence played into the hands of the Peronists and hampered SITRAC-SITRAM from playing the full vanguard role that was open to them on a national scale. Because of the 1968 split in its own ranks, that is, with the comrades of the PRT (*Combatiente*), the PRT (*La Verdad*) was greatly weakened in such cities as Rosario, Tucumán, and Córdoba. Until 1972, it had no influence in either of the two Fiat plants.

As in the other cases we have cited, the class-struggle current in SITRAC-SITRAM developed through difficult battles. In a parallel way, the management sought to undermine and destroy any independent leadership by firing key militants. The response of the workers was likewise similar to those elsewhere.

In January 1971, when seven workers were fired at Concord, the workers took over the plant. The ERP participated by disarming the factory guards. The workers at Materfer and other plants declared their solidarity with Concord. The government threatened to intervene with force. The workers held firm and the management capitulated.

However, the SITRAC-SITRAM leaders in battling the Córdoba CGT, which was led by Peronist bureaucrats adroit enough to put on a leftist front when necessary, tended to follow a sectarian line and thus did not succeed in polarizing sufficient forces around them to be able to take over as an alternative leadership. Plagued by ultraleftism, the class-struggle tendency at SITRAC-SITRAM did not offer a clear program in opposition to the CGT bureaucracy that could have effectively attracted the workers in the other unions in Córdoba.

In the SITRAC-SITRAM actions, for instance, the ultralefts, among other inapt appeals, called for "Neither coup, nor elections. Revolution." Presented as the answer to Lanusse's maneuver of projecting elections, this abstract, sectarian ultraleft slogan was advanced by student groups and the official Argentine section of the Fourth International, the PRT (*Combatiente*).

When the Córdoba CGT bureaucrats, in fear of the SITRAC-SITRAM unions and in response to pressure from the ranks, took

the initiative in projecting mass struggles, the SITRAC-SITRAM leaders at times took sectarian positions.

For instance, in March 1971, the CGT set up a *comisión de lucha* (struggle commission) and called for a massive but peaceful demonstration against the government. Instead of forming a united front with the CGT, the SITRAC-SITRAM leaders called for a separate demonstration. The response to the CGT struggle commission was massive. The march staged by the SITRAC-SITRAM workers resulted in a confrontation in which a nineteen-year-old worker, Adolfo Cepeda, was killed. This aroused the working class.

Under the leadership of Tosco, the CGT struggle commission took the initiative, shifting to the left. About 5,000 persons attended the funeral of Cepeda, whose coffin was draped with the flag of the ERP. Tosco was the only speaker.

A succession of actions followed, exploding in what is now designated as the second Cordobazo. One of the important outcomes was to further the authority of the CGT struggle commission and to relatively weaken the standing of the leaders of SITRAC-SITRAM, since they continued to refuse to participate in the deliberations and decisions of the CGT body.

After the second Cordobazo, the SITRAC-SITRAM leadership, realizing that it was becoming isolated, modified its sectarian stance and began looking for allies.

An attempt was made, for example, in Buenos Aires to set up a commission, the function of which was to support SITRAC-SITRAM. Along with other groupings, the Partido Comunista Revolucionario, the Vanguardia Comunista, the PRT (*Combattente*), and the PRT (*La Verdad*) participated in this. However, the commission was paralyzed by the sectarian attitude of the ultralefts. One of their first moves was to propose the expulsion of the Communist Party and Política Obrera (the Lambertists) from the commission.⁹³ Then they objected to the participation of the PRT (*La Verdad*) on the grounds that it was “reformist” and not for “armed struggle.” Unfortunately for them, the bulk of the worker representation in the commission resulted from the influence of the PRT (*La Verdad*).

In Córdoba, under the direct control of the SITRAC-SITRAM leadership, the support commission developed in a more democratic atmosphere because of the pressure of the workers.

As two powerful unions in the forefront of the struggle in Córdoba and in a most influential position in the Argentine vanguard, it was natural that SITRAC-SITRAM would be singled

out for attack by the government. The authorities bided their time until they felt that the two unions had become relatively isolated. On October 26, 1971, the government intervened with an order dissolving the two unions. Hundreds of militant workers were fired by the management. Gendarmes occupied the plants.

The response to these moves was very limited, even within the plants. To understand this, it is necessary to review two national plenary meetings called by the SITRAC-SITRAM leadership in an attempt to establish a national class-struggle tendency.

7. The SITRAC-SITRAM Plenary Meetings

The SITRAC-SITRAM leadership called a conference (plenary meeting) for August 28-29, 1971. The following agenda was proposed: "(a) analysis of the economic, social, and political situation facing the country; (b) problems of the labor movement, rejection of the passivity of José Rucci and his traitorous union clique of the Azopardo CGT;⁹⁴ (c) national coordination of the protests of the working class and popular sectors against starvation wages, the turning over of the nation to imperialism, and the intensification of the government's policy of repression." All union bodies and rank-and-file organizations were invited to attend.

On the basis of this call, the *comisión interna* of the Banco de la Nación called a conference in Buenos Aires to designate a delegation to go to Córdoba. The police intervened, blocking any public meeting. Nevertheless a number of delegates and activists from *comisiones internas* did meet and voted for a declaration to be presented to the conference in Córdoba.

The meeting opened on schedule but with some delegates not present. Thirty-five had been arrested, including those from the San Lorenzo Interunion.

Between 800 and 1,000 persons attended. The majority represented the student movement and the various revolutionary organizations. These groups were asked to leave after designating two delegates for each organization; however, most of them stayed.

The presence of a large number of leftists not directly part of the labor movement had its detrimental aspects in the functioning of the conference. It required a two-hour discussion to decide whether the delegates of the Uruguayan Convención Nacional de Trabajadores should be added to the honorary presidium.

The most important forces present were the pharmaceutical and printers' unions influenced by Ongaro, the CGT from Corrientes, the *comisión interna* from the Escalada textile mill, railroad workers from Tafi Viejo, the Buenos Aires delegation headed by national bank workers (which included representatives from fourteen *comisiones internas*), and leaders who had been fired from Chrysler and Petroquímica. Leaders of the Partido Comunista Revolucionario were present although they represented hardly any workers. Política Obrera was there with a few workers. Various small independent worker formations of Córdoba were represented. Also present were a few grouplets like Milicia Obrera, a split-off from the PRT (*Combatiente*).

In spite of the confusion, the proposals made by the SITRAC-SITRAM leadership were generally positive. The followers of Ongaro threatened to walk out if the general political declaration were put to a vote, and the SITRAC-SITRAM leadership correctly pulled back on this, leaving the declaration open to further discussion by the various groupings. The SITRAC-SITRAM leadership proposed that a Provisional Coordinating Committee composed of representatives of the unions and tendencies present be set up to handle activities following the conference. The ultralefts protested against including the Buenos Aires national bank workers, since this would give the PRT (*La Verdad*) a voice in the commission. This led to the proposal being altered to exclude the *comisiones internas* and the *cuerpos de delegados*.

The conference as a whole revealed the extreme weakness of the class-struggle tendencies. The only real trade union forces present consisted of the SITRAC-SITRAM, the small Ongaro unions, the national bank workers and other Buenos Aires *comisiones internas*, and the San Lorenzo Interunion group, who never made it to the gathering because of the police. Many of the speakers dealt in abstract generalities, and the conference never got beyond the first point on the agenda.

A second plenary was held on September 22. This time only 300 persons were present. In some respects this was an improvement since it gave greater relative weight to the workers. The meeting ran more smoothly and made better headway, including acceptance of a motion presented by the Buenos Aires bank workers to form a national class-struggle tendency at the next conference. But the meeting represented only limited forces. The Ongaro unions did not participate.

A third gathering was never held, since SITRAC-SITRAM was

dissolved by the government. In spite of the immense mobilizations, the Peronist bureaucracy still retained an iron grip on the central mass organizations, the trade unions. In the second half of 1971, a partial lull in the class struggle set in. The government took full advantage of the isolation of SITRAC-SITRAM, calculating that the two unions were no longer in position to mobilize an effective defense against a vigorous effort to crush the strongest point of the incipient national class-struggle tendency.

8. Broad Mass Mobilizations

Mass protest actions against the government did not cease during 1972. However, the axis of the protests shifted from the industrial proletariat to sectors of the white-collar workers and the petty bourgeoisie.

Important actions initiated by numbers of students gained either mass sympathy (Tucumán) or direct mass support (Mar del Plata).

The action in Mar del Plata was especially important as a model in building a united-front defense against repression. The demonstration resulted from an attempt by the police to prevent eyewitnesses from testifying before a judge about a murder committed by fascist-minded thugs linked to the local CGT bureaucracy.

At the end of 1971, the gangsters attacked a student assembly, killing one student, Silvia Filler, and wounding another, Marcos Chueque. The immediate response of the students was ultraleftist. They went down the streets, breaking windows.

Six months later when the assassin was brought to trial, the police, in hope of discrediting the testimony of the main witnesses, arrested four students after they had attended a meeting of 1,000 persons protesting the killing. Three of them were members of the PRT (*La Verdad*), which by then had become the Partido Socialista Argentino.⁹⁵

The involvement of the PRT (*La Verdad*) made it possible to orient the protest along united-front lines. First a united-front committee was set up in the university. The students demonstrated against the police, but with appeals to the working class to join in the protests through their unions. The students called for a silent march on June 8, 1972, under the slogan, "Free the Compañeros." Support began mounting from all sides. Many professional groups declared their solidarity. The rector of the

university and the governing council sent telegrams to Lanusse. Professors, assistants, and graduate students passed resolutions.

Various unions began to make declarations of support. These included light and power, the printers, oil, transport, mill, and the bank workers' unions.

Under the impact of the growing mass support and mass actions, the CGT bureaucrats, despite their connections with those guilty of the crime, declared a general sympathy strike for June 14.

Many political parties came out in support of the campaign, and they set up a broad coordinating committee.

The general strike was quite successful. High school students turned out in mass and joined young workers in going from factory to factory to make sure the entire town came out.

The army was mobilized but the troops found it impossible to stop the demonstrators, who divided into groups of 300 to 1,000 that roamed the city. People on the sidelines cheered the demonstrators, reflecting the overwhelming popularity of the antigovernmental action.

The government decided to beat a retreat. All the prisoners were freed except Jorge Sprovieri, a member of the Partido Socialista Argentino, who was sent to a prison ship in Buenos Aires. However, he too was freed fifty-six days later.

In April 1972 in answer to rate increases for electricity, demonstrations broke out in Córdoba, Rosario, San Luis, San Juan, and Mendoza.

The high point was the mass mobilization in Mendoza. Led by the teachers and other white-collar workers, with some support from the industrial workers, the entire city rose in protest against the rate increases. The demonstrations lasted four days. The repressive forces killed four persons but could not put down the demonstrations. Eventually the government capitulated and lowered the rates to the previous level throughout the area where it had attempted to put across the boost.

In the city of General Roca, the popular outburst was of particular significance because of the fact that it was the first uprising with a clearly defined leadership, although that leadership was bourgeois. The Rocazo developed out of a conflict between the ruling class of the province and the federal government. The local ruling class set up what amounted to a provisional government opposed to the official Lanusse government in that area.

The efforts made by the masses to influence the troops was also a significant aspect of the Rocazo. New methods of struggle were used and more advanced forms of organization appeared in an embryonic way. A sympathizer of the Partido Socialista Argentino set up a "Radio Free Roca," giving the small group of members of the PSA living there an opportunity to advance a line in opposition to the provisional bourgeois government. They called for the formation of worker-neighborhood coordinating committees, defense committees, and so on.

The army's tactic was to arrest large numbers of demonstrators, beat them, and then turn them loose. No one was killed. At the end of a week of protests and clashes with the occupation forces, the army released all the prisoners it had taken.

After the government succeeded in dissolving SITRAC-SITRAM and a relative downturn was felt in the labor movement, the guerrilla groups turned away from such actions as distributing milk and meat in the poor districts, resorting more to terrorism. This included a number of assassinations, among them a former head of police in Tucumán, a leader of the New Force Party in Buenos Aires, a rank-and-file soldier who refused to give up his arms, the manager of the Italian Fiat enterprise, and an army general.⁹⁶

The ERP and the Montoneros were the most active in this period. But in general the guerrilla groups have declined as shown by the decreasing number of actions.

This is owing to various factors, among them the increased effectiveness of the governmental repression and the decreasing interest among frustrated layers of the petty bourgeoisie in terrorism or clandestine acts of violence against the ruling class in face of the lure offered by the regime of an electoral alternative.

9. The Test of Two Lines in Argentina

We have seen how the "turn" adopted at the Ninth World Congress led to disaster in Bolivia. However, it could be argued that any other line would have ended similarly. In the case of Argentina the situation is different. The PRT (*La Verdad*) voted against the "turn," while the PRT (*Combatiente*) voted for it and set out to show the results that could be obtained by putting it into practice. The PRT (*Combatiente*) applied the line faithfully, as Comrades Maitan, Mandel, and other comrades of the majority of the United Secretariat have testified.

The PRT (*La Verdad*), on the other hand, continued to apply the method of the Transitional Program and can offer the results of its activities as a positive test of the correctness of the position taken by the minority at the Ninth World Congress. The essence of the policy followed by the PRT (*La Verdad*) has been to attempt to construct a Leninist-type party by penetrating the mass movement, participating in mass mobilizations, and presenting itself as the revolutionary alternative leadership in the existing mass organizations. That is, it has not attempted to bypass the existing formations of the masses or their way of going into action. It has sought instead to raise within them transitional demands capable of assisting them in advancing beyond the present forms of the class struggle to higher forms pointing toward the conquest of power.

The conception of the PRT (*La Verdad*) is that to lead the masses a program is required that takes into account their most deeply felt needs at their present level of understanding. The question of armed struggle likewise has to be raised in a transitional way and not as a schema into which the masses have to be fitted.

That is why the history of the PRT (*La Verdad*) since the Ninth World Congress is directly tied to the history of the mass struggles that have arisen in Argentina. The PRT (*La Verdad*) sought in everything it did to gear into the objective situation that was shaped by the class struggle, participating in the mass movement in order to advance it according to its own inherent logic.

With the PRT (*Combatiente*), the opposite occurred, as we shall see. They embarked on a "prolonged war" that called for the construction of a "revolutionary army." They disregarded events in the class struggle involving the masses except as these might be utilized to advance their narrow schema calling for construction of an armed instrument under their own command. This was a sectarian objective, standing in contrast to the broad objective followed by the PRT (*La Verdad*) of constructing a revolutionary political leadership arising out of the actual struggle itself.

In order to reach a better appreciation of the practical course followed by the PRT (*Combatiente*) it is necessary to know the main lines of their political orientation. Of particular importance is their international outlook and their view of the Fourth International.

10. Call for a New International

The PRT (*Combatiente*) believes that the Fourth International is finished as a revolutionary International and that a new International must be built. The bases for the new International, they hold, are at hand in China, Albania, North Korea, North Vietnam, Cuba, and certain organizations now outside of the Fourth International, plus at least part of the Fourth International.

Following its Fifth Congress (held in July 1970), the Central Committee of the PRT (*Combatiente*) clarified its position on the Fourth International through a statement by one of its members entitled "Minuta Sobre Internacional" (Memorandum on the International). This was made public along with all the other decisions of the Fifth Congress of the PRT (*Combatiente*).

It is necessary to restate, so as to leave no room for error, exaggeration, or false illusions, the realistic point of view I upheld at the congress that we do not believe in the possibility of the Fourth International becoming converted into the revolutionary international party, the need of which we uphold. We believe that this is now historically impossible, and that the role of the International, granting the favorable supposition that it becomes converted into a proletarian revolutionary organization, should be to seek to construct a new Revolutionary International modeled after the Leninist Third International and based on the Vietnamese, Chinese, Cuban, Korean, and Albanian parties.⁹⁷

Thus the PRT (*Combatiente*) has indicated publicly that it is battling for fundamental changes in the program of the Fourth International. First, they want to convert the International into a "revolutionary" organization, that is, an organization that agrees with and practices their orientation of "prolonged war" and construction of "revolutionary armies" on all continents. Secondly, they insist that the International drop its position of calling for a political revolution in China and other deformed workers' states, and instead support those Stalinized regimes and parties politically, pressing them only to set up a "new revolutionary International" open to certain other groupings.

We ratify our adhesion with the intention of bringing about the proletarianization of the International, of transforming it into a revolutionary organization, and of struggling to orient it toward the formation of a new revolutionary International based on the Chinese, Cuban,

Korean, Vietnamese, and Albanian parties, and sister organizations that are fighting in a revolutionary manner against capitalism and imperialism in each country.⁹⁸

The leaders of the PRT (*Combatiente*) had expressed the same views, although not as explicitly, on the eve of the Ninth World Congress. In their programmatic booklet *The Only Road to Workers' Power and Socialism*, written in 1968, they called on the Fourth International to adopt the world strategy and tactics of Castroism.

Within the framework of the Fourth International we have important contributions to make, but to do so we must define our own strategy for this stage of the world revolution.

We believe that our party should clearly pronounce itself in favor of the world strategy formulated by Castroism. . . .

Firstly, we are in favor of announcing our agreement with Castroist strategy and tactics for the world and continental revolution for the following reasons: a) We consider them essentially correct. . . .⁹⁹

They also made clear their judgment of the different currents—Castroism, Maoism, and Trotskyism—on a world scale. In their opinion both Trotskyism and Maoism are continuations of Leninism—Trotskyism in the field of theory, Maoism in the field of action. Thus the central task today, as they see it, is to reach a higher unity, which to them would represent a return to Leninism. This, they hold, is the essential meaning of the development of Castroism.

Today the principal theoretical task of revolutionary Marxists is to fuse the main contributions of Trotskyism and Maoism into a higher unity which would prove to be a real return to Leninism. The development of the world revolution leads inevitably to this goal as is indicated by the unilateral advances of Maoism toward the assimilation of Trotskyism (the break with the Soviet bureaucracy, the cultural revolution); the moves of Trotskyism toward incorporating Maoist contributions (the theory of revolutionary war) and, above all, the effort of the Cuban leadership to achieve this superior unity.¹⁰⁰

In their public statements and in their publications, the PRT (*Combatiente*) hewed to this view. They reject publicly defining themselves as Trotskyists.

For instance, when they were asked in an interview published

in the August 29, 1972, issue of *Punto Final*, a magazine widely read in Latin America, whether the PRT (*Combatiente*) is a Trotskyist organization. Comrades Santucho and Gorriarán,¹⁰¹ who are top leaders of the official Argentine section of the Fourth International, replied:

The party that leads the Revolutionary Army of the People [ERP], the Revolutionary Workers party [PRT (*Combatiente*)], defines itself ideologically as Marxist-Leninist and welcomes the contributions of various revolutionists from other nations, including those of our main Comandante, Che Guevara. It also welcomes the contributions that Trotsky, Kim Il Sung, Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi Minh, and General Giap have made for the revolution. We believe that it is inadequate and inappropriate to ideologically define the given organization as Trotskyist. We certainly feel that Trotsky was a revolutionist and most of our members have read his contributions to revolution, especially his contribution toward a critique of the bureaucracy and on permanent revolution.¹⁰²

On all major international events, the PRT (*Combatiente*) publishes its own line even when it is diametrically opposed to that of the world Trotskyist movement. Thus they publicly supported the Mao-Nixon summit conference as a victory for the world revolution.¹⁰³

On the other hand, they have never published a statement or resolution of the Fourth International.

Recently they even changed their position on the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Originally they had accepted the Fourth International position of condemning the invasion. Now they support the invasion, thus placing themselves in line with the position taken by the Cuban Communist Party.

The PRT (*Combatiente*) is opposed to building Trotskyist parties in countries where groups are to be found that correspond to their criteria for building a "new revolutionary International" composed of Maoists, Castroists, and those Trotskyists that supported the "turn" made at the Ninth World Congress. Thus they oppose building a Trotskyist group in Chile, where the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria already occupies the ground floor.¹⁰⁴ The same holds for Uruguay, where the Tupamaros are operating. And, of course, the same goes for China, where they consider the Chinese Communist Party to be a genuine Marxist-Leninist organization.

One grouping will certainly not be included in the "new revolutionary International"—the PRT (*La Verdad*). In fact the

comrades of the PRT (*Combatiente*) are pressing for the expulsion of the PRT (*La Verdad*) from the ranks of the Fourth International.

Others, too, may be in for summary eviction if the views of the PRT (*Combatiente*) on the composition of the Fourth International should come to prevail. The interview with Comrades Santucho and Gorriarán in *Punto Final* included the following slanderous statement adopted in 1970 at the fifth congress held by the organization:

“The Trotskyist movement, it must be explained, involves heterogeneous sectors: from counterrevolutionary adventurers who use its banner while at the same time prostituting it, to consistent revolutionists.”

Just who are the “counterrevolutionary adventurers” in the Trotskyist movement? They remain unidentified in this monstrous assertion borrowed from the school of Stalinism.

It is crystal clear that the PRT (*Combatiente*) is not Trotskyist. In making their call for the formation of a “new revolutionary International,” the leaders of the PRT (*Combatiente*) did not wait to discuss the question within the Fourth International. They broadcast it to the world, making sure in particular that it came to the attention of the Cubans. This is understandable, since they are publicly avowed Castroists.

From their point of view, it can be seen why they were elated over the “turn” made by the Ninth World Congress on Latin America. As Castroists they viewed it as a qualitative step in their direction. By the same token they showed how correct the minority was at the Ninth World Congress in judging the resolution on Latin America to be an adaptation to Castroism.

In Argentina, then, we have two groups associated with the Fourth International. One, the PRT (*Combatiente*), is a publicly avowed Castroist organization. It supports the majority position of orienting toward guerrilla war for a prolonged period on a continental scale. The other organization, the PRT (*La Verdad*), is opposed to the Castroist line. Dedicated to the strategy of building a Leninist combat party, it supported the minority position at the Ninth World Congress.

Unlike the PRT (*Combatiente*), the PRT (*La Verdad*) views the growth of Trotskyism as an absolute necessity for the triumph of the world revolution. It sees itself as one contingent in the international struggle led by the Trotskyist movement against the bureaucracies of the degenerated or deformed workers’ states and the Stalinist parties, which stand for “peaceful coexistence”

with imperialism and class collaboration with the indigenous bourgeoisie. Therefore in all the countries whose state-controlled parties the PRT (*Combatiente*) wishes to include in a "new revolutionary International," the PRT (*La Verdad*) favors a political revolution, with the exception of Cuba, where the position of the PRT (*La Verdad*) is the same as that of the rest of the Fourth International.¹⁰⁵

The PRT (*La Verdad*) has always referred to itself as a Trotskyist party and as part of the Fourth International. It follows the method outlined in the Transitional Program in seeking to win leadership of the Argentine masses.

This difference between the PRT (*Combatiente*) and the PRT (*La Verdad*) on the key question of attitude toward the Fourth International is naturally reflected in their activity on the national scene. This becomes even clearer as we examine the activities of the two groups in Argentina.

11. Two Views of the Cordobazo

All organizations in Argentina that consider themselves to be socialist hold that the Cordobazo marked a turning point in the history of the country. In the opinion of the PRT (*La Verdad*), the Cordobazo opened up a prerevolutionary period. The PRT (*Combatiente*) took the view that Argentina had entered a prerevolutionary period even before the Cordobazo and even when the working class was still in retreat or marking time. This judgment corresponded with the position taken by the majority at the Ninth World Congress that the entire continent had entered a prerevolutionary period and was on the verge of a civil war of continental scope. The PRT (*Combatiente*) naturally agreed that this held true for Argentina as much as anywhere else, if not more so. Thus to the PRT (*Combatiente*) the Cordobazo marked the close of the prerevolutionary period and the opening of "civil war."

And that was how they evaluated the situation at their Fifth Congress, where they brought things up to date. "The Fourth Congress [1968] showed that Argentina as a whole was in a prerevolutionary situation; reality confirmed this day by day and today we hold an even more concrete view: the revolutionary civil war has begun."¹⁰⁶

Let us now take a look at how the two organizations responded to the rising mass mobilizations.

In the April 21, 1969, issue of its newspaper *La Verdad*, published at the time of the Ninth World Congress and a month before the first Cordobazo, the PRT (*La Verdad*) stated that

the mobilizations at Villa Quinteros and Villa Campo and those of the students in Tucumán and Rosario, make it clear that the upswing in the North is broadening on a national scale.

The actions in the three places have indicated some of the *methods needed to confront the regime: mass demonstrations, occupation of school departments and buildings, resistance to the repressive forces. It is necessary to extend and coordinate these actions.* [Emphasis added]

The PRT (*Combatiente*) drew the opposite conclusions. Instead of seeing the need to project mass actions in the streets as a correct and necessary step in educating and organizing the masses in the struggle against the repression, they projected clandestine actions by small vanguard groups, postponing mass actions to the time when a sufficiently large military force could be assembled to take on the repressive forces militarily. This meant in practice not trying to mobilize the masses anywhere, anytime.

Just prior to the Cordobazo, the PRT (*Combatiente*) wrote in their paper (May 21, 1969):

The regime's repressive organization and the consciousness of the revolutionary workers' vanguard, *which is learning that it is suicide to confront the police empty-handed*, resulted in the government's apparently winning a victory inasmuch as there were only a few quickie strikes and one or another action authorized to be taken in the interior. . . . And thus we have seen this May Day the beginnings of the application of violence in a clandestine form, hitting if only weakly at the imperialist businesses, institutions of the government. . . . *Public meetings and massive concentrations should be engaged in where we have the military forces capable of resisting the repressive forces of the regime. Meanwhile we should strengthen ourselves through thousands of skirmishes and clandestine actions that will in turn weaken them.* Favorable terrain, the use of surprise, will be the best friends for the conscious vanguard, basing itself more and more in the working people, overcoming the repression of the military dictatorship, servant of the foreign monopolies. [Emphasis added]

Noting the beginning of mass actions in the streets, the PRT (*La Verdad*) called attention to the need to expand them and

extend them on a national scale. The PRT (*Combatiente*), in contrast, warned that it was suicide to confront the repressive forces before a military apparatus had been assembled of sufficient strength to deal with them. Until then, the PRT (*Combatiente*) advised, the vanguard should devote itself to hit-and-run violence.

What stands out in the most salient way in the line of the PRT (*Combatiente*) is the complete absence of a practical program to involve the masses and help them move toward higher forms of struggle. The masses are to wait, arms folded, patiently enduring the blows dealt them, until the military problem is solved through the slow accretion of guerrilla fighters. The concept is gradualist in character.

12. Two Views of General Strikes

The differences between the PRT (*La Verdad*) and the PRT (*Combatiente*) reflected in the quotations cited above can be traced throughout their involvement (or lack of involvement) in the class struggle. This is only to be expected, for the two organizations have been following two different methods. The PRT (*La Verdad*) proceeds from the fact that the actual living class struggle itself indicates the forms that the revolution will take. Consequently at each step in that struggle it seeks to find and raise slogans that will help the masses to advance in political understanding, that will help build the party until it becomes a mass revolutionary party able to appear as a realistic alternative leadership for the class as a whole.

The PRT (*Combatiente*), on the other hand, decided a priori, on the basis of the line adopted by the majority at the Ninth World Congress, that the form the revolution would take in Argentina would be rural guerrilla warfare in a prolonged civil war on a continental scale. With that schema fixed unalterably, save for a shift to urban guerrilla warfare, the leaders of the PRT (*Combatiente*) tried to make the developing mass movement fit the a priori pattern. To them the actual events merely provided an arena for what was viewed as the real revolutionary work, that is, preparations for guerrilla war and the building of an army separate and apart from the mass organizations of the working class.

The actual events, beginning with the Cordobazo and again on

various other occasions, indicated that the most powerful weapon the proletariat had at its disposal in fighting for immediate demands and in preparing for higher stages of struggle against the capitalists, including the question of the conquest of power, was the general strike lifted to a political level. The tendency for such strikes to occur, even at a provincial or city level, and to move toward insurrection, should have alerted any Marxist not caught up in some ultraleft schema that this was the way the masses were preparing to conquer power in Argentina.

Thus at every step in the unfolding struggles, the PRT (*La Verdad*) raised slogans aimed at weakening the trade union bureaucracy, advancing the mass actions, and sinking the party's roots deeper into the mass organizations.

For instance, when a thirty-six-hour general strike was declared by the CGT on November 12-13, 1970, the PRT (*La Verdad*) raised within the labor movement the following demands which the party sought to popularize in the broadest way possible:

Forward with the thirty-six-hour strike! Let it help us prepare for an unlimited general strike for:

- An immediate pay increase of 26,000 [pesos], including the government workers and employees.
- An immediate end to the state of siege and the repeal of all repressive legislation, including the monstrous death penalty.
- Recognition of all parties belonging to the working class and of personalities, including General Perón.

This thirty-six-hour strike must be utilized to prepare the decisive confrontation, which will not come to an end with the winning of a mere wage boost. We must understand that this struggle is not against the government's economic team, but against the whole miserable, sinister government serving the bosses.

The best way to guarantee success for the strike is to organize factory assemblies throughout the country. In all places of work, assemblies should be set up, empowered to vote and to organize concentrations by zone, utilizing the main factories as a base, and setting up picket squads of activists, who will guarantee success in the struggle.¹⁰⁷

It was in order to raise consciousness against the role of the bureaucracy that the PRT (*La Verdad*) advanced the demand that the general strike be organized through the existing factory committees and through assemblies. The slogans, stemming out of the actual struggles, struck a responsive chord. The result was that in some plants the PRT (*La Verdad*) proposals were adopted, and the party's influence grew in the factories.

The PRT (*Combatiente*), in contrast, advanced its schema of

"revolutionary war." Just a few months prior to the general strike in 1970, it announced the existence of an "army," the ERP. The PRT (*Combatiente*) recognized the power of the general strike when it developed, but it proposed no program for the strike, no line of approach for the workers, no organizational forms for developing the strike. Instead, in reporting the general strike in *Combatiente* (December 1970), the editor lectured the workers' vanguard on the necessity of raising their consciousness to the level of guerrilla war:

for them it is necessary to develop a revolutionary consciousness that clearly sets taking power as the objective—the tactics and strategy of our revolution: a revolutionary workers' and popular government, which will be achieved through a prolonged, mass, revolutionary war, a civil war at the beginning and probably national at a later stage before imperialism intervenes.

Not a word was uttered one way or the other concerning moving ahead to new strikes as the outcome of this colossal general strike.

The PRT (*Combatiente*) viewed the general strike as merely offering a more favorable opening for its "revolutionary" actions. This was reflected in a report in the same issue of *El Combatiente* concerning a meeting of the Central Committee that took place in October 1970, after the huge strikes of October 9 and October 22, when the general strike for November had already been called. The Central Committee did not project a line designed for the masses nor propose participating in it. They had something else in mind. "We must be on a state of alert and organize our small forces to act efficiently and methodically in the eventuality of mass mobilizations. It is clear that if they occur all the possibilities will be on the side of the revolutionary forces."

Not a word about the scheduled general strike, not a single word.

13. The Day-to-Day Class Struggle

The class struggle takes place through concrete forms. For instance, at the end of 1970 and the beginning of 1971, the major industries were going through the process of negotiating new contracts. Traditionally these come up every two years in Argentina; but the Onganía regime had suspended negotiations for four years, imposing its own contract terms during this period. In the context of the radicalization that was taking place, it was doubly

necessary to raise the correct slogans for this period and to fight within the factories on the new terms of the contracts. The importance of this was underlined by the strikes that occurred in the auto industry.

Although we could quote at length from the proposals advanced by the PRT (*La Verdad*) in the plants, a single brief statement will serve to indicate their nature: "A pay increase of no less than 40 percent and 20,000 [pesos] as a minimum; no one should sign for less; for a sliding scale of wages; for a guaranteed number of hours; let the CGT draw up a plan of struggle on these points to be voted on at plenary meetings of delegates of activists, and in assemblies by plants or union locals."¹⁰⁸

An example of a different concrete form of struggle was provided by the second Cordobazo and its aftermath. The PRT (*La Verdad*) raised the slogan of a twenty-four-hour nationwide strike. And it added to its plan of struggle the slogans "Free the political prisoners," "Against the attack on the Córdoba unions."

The PRT (*Combatiente*) acted in accordance with a completely different concept of how the party would grow, how mass consciousness would develop, and how the struggle for power would evolve. It publicized this concept in an interview that appeared in the January-February 1971 issue of *Cristianismo y Revolución*.

Asked the question, "Does the PRT then renounce legal action and concentrate on military activity?" the PRT (*Combatiente*) leaders explained how they counted on winning the masses:

The strategic principle guiding us is to extend the war, which in our opinion has already begun. We want to make completely clear that we are not trying to *win* this war at the moment but to extend it through our role of armed detachment of the vanguard (because we do not claim to *be* the vanguard, which in our country does not exist as a constituted organization). We carry forward this extension of the people's civil war through political action and military action. This explains many of our unspectacular and even "petty" actions. Obviously it is easy for a revolutionary commando group to take a truckload of bottled milk or meat and distribute it in a slum. However, we are not trying to solve the problem of hunger in this slum but to demonstrate to the masses that this action and many similar ones are feasible with few arms and few participants. When this idea catches on among the people, the war of the masses is invincible. Likewise, for similar reasons, we *sign* our undertakings, those that turn out well and those that turn out badly, because it is necessary to show that the armed struggle is not the task of a few, of an "elite" of the superskilled, but that it is a task of the people and that defeats and errors occur in it.¹⁰⁹

The contrast could hardly be greater. Around them rage mass struggles. A bitter battle is unfolding for leadership of the masses. In the trade unions the real revolutionists are involved in daily skirmishes with the bureaucrats. But the PRT (*Combatiente*) will have none of this. It has discovered the true secret of how to reach the masses. It demonstrates by small exemplary actions how easy it is to practice guerrilla war. It busily liberates and distributes bottles of milk, sausages, and steaks to "show" the masses how they, too, can follow the "turn" initiated at the Ninth World Congress. Naturally it is done modestly, with the admission of inevitable occasional mistakes in seizures or deliveries.

In the entire interview in *Cristianismo y Revolución*, the PRT (*Combatiente*) never once mentions the CGT or any trade union struggle. Instead they repeat a few standard phrases always to be found in their statements and resolutions referring to working "in the factories, shops, slums, and universities, struggling in defense of specific interests and advancing a political line that takes into account the level of consciousness of the masses. . . ." ¹¹⁰

But the PRT (*Combatiente*) never informs us what the political line is concretely in the factories, shops, slums, and universities that takes into account the level of the masses. Not one concrete example is ever offered of a proletarian orientation in their mass work. They speak in detail of their armed actions, of the relationship between their "army" and the party. They even refer to raising their own consciousness by reading the works of Mao, and the contributions of Carlos Marighella and the Tupamaros. Yet with regard to the class struggle in Argentina they have almost nothing to say.

In the documents of the Fifth Congress, future guerrilla actions are discussed down to the fine point of how many men the Argentine government will have to deploy against each rural guerrilla unit. The documents include nothing, absolutely nothing—neither facts nor analysis—on the concrete class struggle taking place in Argentina. Of the fifty-six pages of their report on the decisions of the Fifth Congress, they devote less than three pages (pages 31-33) to the mass movement. The section entitled "Resolution on Work Within the Trade Union and Mass Movements" does not mention the CGT even once. Nor does it mention any strike, any tendency, or any union! Instead it merely repeats the standard generalities used by the PRT (*Combatiente*)

about fighting for all trade union demands, fighting for the leadership of the mass organizations, penetrating the masses, and so on.

14. Some Revealing Statistics

The failure of the Fifth Congress to so much as mention the events taking place in the class struggle, still less offer a political line for active intervention in those events, is not exceptional for the PRT (*Combatiente*). In the fifteen issues of *Combatiente* that were published in 1971 (we have not been able to obtain two of them, numbers 52 and 54), very few articles deal with the labor movement in Argentina. *Combatiente* is unconcerned about analyzing specific struggles. Some happenings do find a reflection in the pages of *Combatiente*, but only thinly. The January issue carried reportage directed to the workers of Fiat in Córdoba. The September issue commented on the SITRAC-SITRAM conference in Córdoba. The December issue featured a critique of the class-struggle tendency as reflected in the SITRAC-SITRAM conferences. A line on intervening in the class struggle is conspicuous by its absence. Reports or comments on the strikes sweeping the country from one end to the other do not seem to reach the editors.

The organ of the ERP, *Estrella Roja* (Red Star), is loaded with details about the “armed actions” going on, such as the distribution of milk and sausages. No doubt a narrow audience finds this interesting reading, but it has little if anything to do with the class struggle in Argentina.

If we check *La Verdad* for the same period in 1971, when it, too, was being published in the underground, a totally different picture of the events in Argentina emerges. In that year no less than 250 articles dealt with concrete working-class struggles. The development of various trade union currents is presented, specific actions are reported, suggestions on line are carefully delineated.

The articles in *La Verdad* are not mere commentaries. They reflect the real participation of the PRT (*La Verdad*) in the class struggle.

Despite their limited numbers, the comrades of PRT (*La Verdad*) intervened in almost every major class conflict. Members were active in all kinds of strikes, including Chrysler, Petroquímica, the telephone workers, and the national bank. They were present as part of the mass movement in the SITRAC-SITRAM

conferences, in the student mobilizations in Tucumán, La Plata, and the mass mobilizations in Mar del Plata. They were in the forefront in organizing united-front efforts against the repression and in presenting a class-struggle alternative in the heat of battle in the General Roca uprising.

At every turn they sought to present the required transitional, democratic, or immediate demands fitted to the needs and consciousness of the workers. They sought to use the tactic of the united front to put the masses in motion on a principled basis. They raised slogans designed to help the workers gain a clearer understanding of the political tasks and of the need to organize defense units as a step toward armed struggle on a mass scale.

In answer to the maneuver of the Lanusse government to divert the masses with parliamentary elections, it was the PRT (*La Verdad*) that presented a class alternative through the Workers' and Socialist Pole.¹¹¹ The party always seeks to mobilize and organize the masses and to build the party through the method embodied in the Transitional Program. It is this political reality that is reflected in the statistics of its articles in *La Verdad*.

The comrades of the PRT (*Combatiente*) place totally different emphasis on what should be done in Argentina. They are, of course, supported in this by the leaders of the majority in the United Secretariat. Comrade Livio Maitan brought this out very clearly in his article in the April 26, 1971, issue of *Intercontinental Press*, "Political Crisis and Revolutionary Struggle in Argentina."

Organizations devoted to armed struggle have won considerable influence and staged spectacular actions. The lessons of May 1969 and the latest repressions have made clear to thousands and tens of thousands of workers that class struggle in Argentina has now reached the level of armed confrontation and that the military dictatorship can be combated only by revolutionary violence.¹¹²

Comrade Maitan specifies what he means by "revolutionary violence" as the only means to combat the military dictatorship:

These actions, which have come in rapid succession since the start of the year, especially in February and the first half of March, and which have made a very great impression on the daily and weekly bourgeois press, can be categorized as follows:

a. Actions aimed at acquiring funds by expropriations carried out in the old Bolshevik tradition (the most spectacular stroke was the one in Córdoba which, according to the Argentinian press, brought its organizers 121,000,000 pesos [350 pesos equal US\$1].

b. Actions aimed at acquiring arms and medical supplies (the most spectacular stroke in this area was at a clinic in Buenos Aires).

c. Actions designed to win the sympathies of the most deprived strata by handing out food (meat, milk, etc.) taken from big distributing firms.

d. Actions linked to workers' struggles (the most important so far was the one carried out by an armed detachment which invaded the FIAT factory in Córdoba and held a meeting there).¹¹³

These actions are in strict accordance with the concept guiding the PRT (*Combatiente*). Comrade Maitan continues:

All these actions have effectively achieved their objective of armed propaganda. At the present time the ERP is the best-known revolutionary organization and has won very broad sympathy—in some big plants, too. From the technical point of view, even the enemy has had to recognize that the ERP has scored some points.¹¹⁴

To settle any doubts that may still exist as to the basic identity of the line of the PRT (*Combatiente*) and the line of the majority, Comrade Maitan specifies that it is an extension, a practical application, of the “turn” voted for at the Ninth World Congress:

The strategic perspective the Argentine comrades are following is the one laid down by the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International—elaborated and made more precise by the last two national congresses of the PRT—of a prolonged armed struggle, a revolutionary war, which might involve the intervention of the imperialists and thus could not be waged without profound ties to, and increasing participation by, the masses.¹¹⁵

Whether the leaders of the PRT (*Combatiente*) would agree with Comrade Maitan that the ultimate source of their line is the Ninth World Congress may well be doubted—they give credit for the original thinking to Mao Tse-tung, General Giap, Kim Il Sung, and above all Comandante Guevara. But it is true that they share with Comrade Maitan the error of rating their “armed actions” as the most important development in the class struggle in Argentina.

15. On Popular Frontism

So far we have dealt with the different orientations guiding the work of the two organizations. The PRT (*La Verdad*) is engaged in advancing the banners of Trotskyism in the trade unions and

the mass movement. The PRT (*Combatiente*) is engaged in forming clandestine armed groups under political banners intended to be broad enough to attract various and even contradictory tendencies (from the Fourth International to the Maoists).

Although both groups are committed formally to fighting for the political independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie, the PRT (*Combatiente*) has been evolving away from the Trotskyist position on this question. To disregard the importance of a clear line on independent political action is quite characteristic of all the guerrilla-oriented groups in Latin America. It is one of the negative aspects of Castroism.

The programmatic stand of the PRT (*La Verdad*) on this question is completely clear—for the independence of the working class, against any programmatic concessions to the bourgeoisie, against any political blocs with any sector of the ruling class or its appendages. The PRT (*La Verdad*) is firmly opposed politically to the Allende regime in Chile and all other bourgeois-nationalist regimes in Latin America or elsewhere.

We believe that the essential thing is to struggle for the political independence of the labor movement. In Argentina you cannot speak seriously of either a revolution or socialism while the workers remain under the political influence of bourgeois parties and leaders, and especially of Perón and Peronism.¹¹⁶

That this strike should not be utilized by the bureaucrats, who only want to bring pressure to bear against the government to help out the Frondizi wing. That this strike should likewise not be utilized in behalf of the UCR of the People, nor for the Peronist leadership, including General Perón, the one most responsible for the defeats suffered by the labor movement in the past fifteen years.¹¹⁷

This strike must be the starting point for the independent political organization of the workers, culminating in a government of the workers and the people.¹¹⁸

On the question of Chile, which has served to test some tendencies in a rather decisive way, the PRT (*La Verdad*) took an unequivocal stand:

Objectively the Allende government is not a workers' government. Contrary to what the CP and the MIR believe, Allende has not gone beyond the limits of nationalism. The very important nationalizations carried out in the country, even though they are the most powerful blows dealt imperialism in the Southern Cone, have not liquidated the capitalist system based on private property.¹¹⁹

The attitude of the PRT (*Combatiente*) toward the Allende government, like their attitude in general toward the formation of governmental or programmatic blocs with sectors of the bourgeoisie, is confused to say the least.

This is most clearly reflected in the stands they have taken with regard to the Allende government and to the Broad Front in Uruguay, although it is also apparent in some of their recent declarations on political developments in Argentina.¹²⁰

On the Chilean situation, the PRT (*Combatiente*) indicates where it stands by supporting the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria politically. In their interview with *Punto Final*, for example, Comrades Santucho and Gorriarán stated: "Our modest opinion of the Chilean situation is that the correct line and approach for the victory of the revolution in Chile is that of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left."¹²¹

The leaders of the PRT (*Combatiente*) have quoted the positions adopted by the MIR at length without commenting even on the MIR's support for Allende.

As for Uruguay, the PRT (*Combatiente*) took their line from the Tupamaros, who supported the bourgeois candidates in the struggle over slates within the Frente Amplio. The leaders of the PRT (*Combatiente*) made it clear that in their opinion the Tupamaros had adopted an essentially correct position.

As for the criticism of the PRT (Uruguay) made by Hansen in the December 13, 1971, issue of *Intercontinental Press*, they disagreed. It will be recalled that Hansen solidarized with the objectives of the Uruguayan comrades who entered the Frente Amplio in order to fight from within for independent political action and in opposition to running bourgeois candidates. He criticized the continuation of this tactical course once the leaders of the Frente Amplio imposed as a requirement for participating in the formation the inclusion of the names of the top bourgeois candidates on the slates of all the tendencies. The leaders of the PRT (*Combatiente*) held that Hansen's position was sectarian.¹²²

The question was not unimportant. Class lines were involved. The comrades of the PRT (Uruguay) were engaged in carrying out a *tactic* aimed at advancing the principle of independent political action by pressing for a working-class slate. The Tupamaros entered the Frente Amplio because it was the popular thing to do. They did not join the fight for a working-class slate, although their participation would have been of considerable aid. Instead, they went along with the game of putting up bourgeois

candidates. The PRT (*Combatiente*) leaders stood with them, declaring their support for the line of the Tupamaros.

More recently the Tupamaros have gone even further, offering to support the bourgeois armed forces who have been implacably hunting them down, if the generals would only move toward setting up a government to reconstruct the nation.

There can be no doubt that if the armed forces, or whoever, would initiate or help to initiate a road toward national reconstruction they would find us unconditionally at their side. We remain ready for any kind of contacts and we will wait for a reply to this note until July 17 at 6 p.m.¹²³

This may, of course, be the Tupamaros' idea of a tactical stunt, aimed at showing up the top commanders of the armed forces (as if they needed to be exposed!). Back of the maneuver, however, lurks a completely unprincipled position. The Tupamaros *are* open to reversing their guerrilla orientation. If a coup were to put in a junta that followed the Peruvian model of General Velasco, the leaders of the Tupamaros have given advance notice that they will change overnight like Héctor Béjar and others in Peru.

What about the leaders of the PRT (*Combatiente*)? Will such opportunistic intimations on the part of the Tupamaros cause them to modify their opposition to the Fourth International's attempting to construct a section in Uruguay? This remains to be seen.

The PRT (*Combatiente*) leaders have not extended their deviations from Trotskyism on this question to the Argentine political scene. Yet some of their formulations are hardly reassuring. Examples are to be found in the editorial statement "Revolutionists and the Democratization of the Country," which was published in the May 1972 issue of *El Combatiente*. The editorial correctly suggests that revolutionists must take advantage of legal openings, but it also discusses making alliances with bourgeois forces. The nature of these alliances is never clarified. To speak of "progressive bourgeois sectors" that "can have an interest in the revolution" is certain to spread confusion if more than that is not actually implied:

As we can see, our perspective for making alliances with reformist parties and groups and other nonproletarian forces is of vital importance for the development of the immediate struggle of the proletariat.

The solution to this problem of alliances can be seen in the fact that these parties and groups (CP, socialists, Christians, PCR, VC, rank-and-

file Peronism, Radical Left, etc.) represent certain working-class sectors, and essentially sectors of the petty bourgeoisie and progressive bourgeois sectors, that is, sectors that suffer from the political and economic oppression of the regime and can have an interest in the revolution, but not with sufficient consistency to be able to lead it forward.¹²⁴

16. The Problem of Peronism

The consolidation of industrial unionism in Argentina during the Perón regime a quarter of a century ago made an indelible impression on the masses. Perón came to power after a period of relative prosperity arising from Argentina's remoteness from the scenes of battle in World War II and its ability to take advantage of a profitable market. Perón had the wherewithal to grant considerable concessions to the masses. Among the consequences were the fastening of a powerful bureaucracy on the labor movement and the instilling of deep illusions among the masses with regard to the capacity of a bourgeois nationalist regime to meet their most pressing needs.

In the interests of Argentine capitalism, Perón sought to maneuver among the imperialist powers. To accomplish this he encouraged the partial mobilization of the masses, but under the strict control of a government-dominated bureaucracy and with a readiness to resort to repressive measures should this be required.

Perón's policy of standing up to imperialism while supporting and strengthening Argentine capitalism ended in a blind alley, as was inevitable. Perón opposed independent mobilization and arming of the working class, the only class willing and able to confront imperialism in a showdown. He maintained and built up an officer caste loyal to the national bourgeoisie, which in turn is tied to imperialism through the world market. Thus Perón prepared the way for the extensive penetration of American capital both economically and politically in Argentina. Similarly he prepared the way for his own downfall at the hands of his subordinates in the army.

Because the coup d'état of 1955 was proimperialist, the masses were deprived of the opportunity of seeing Perón's own relationship to imperialism become exposed. Their faith in him remained unaltered throughout the seventeen years of his exile.

Peronism has, of course, suffered erosion. But this has been measured in the weakening of the position of the labor bureaucracy, which has betrayed the working class under every regime since Perón was toppled. This process has not yet led to the

dissipation of nationalist illusions or of illusions in Perón as an individual. Perón's return to Argentina, however, favors speeding up this process under present conditions.¹²⁵

Peronism is the expression of a deep contradiction in Argentine politics. It is based on the existence of a very powerful labor movement that has never been defeated so far as the existence of its mass organizations and its high level of combativity is concerned. At the same time, Peronism ties the working class politically to capitalism through a bourgeois party.

The inevitable failure of any "nationalist" course to solve the problems besetting the working class and its allies signifies a very favorable objective situation for the Argentine revolutionary socialist movement, provided that it is deeply embedded in the mass movement and offers a clear programmatic alternative to all the nationalist and populist combinations.

At the same time the illusions among the masses concerning Perón and Peronism constitute a standing danger to our own movement, since our ranks cannot be sealed off from the milieu in which they work. This requires absolute clarity on the nature of Peronism and constant alertness to its invidiousness.

This problem is well understood by the PRT (*La Verdad*) in view of its rich experience in mass work in organizations dominated by Peronism. The PRT (*La Verdad*) teaches its members in the Marxist tradition of insisting on the independence of the working-class movement against any and all blocs with the nationalist bourgeoisie. Precisely because of the opening that has been developing on the electoral front, the PRT (*La Verdad*) has been stressing its opposition to any populist, nationalist, or Popular Front formation that seeks to induce the workers into turning away from independent political action and voting for bourgeois candidates, as in the case of the Frente Amplio in Uruguay and the Unidad Popular in Chile.

That is why the Workers' and Socialist Pole, for which the PSA is campaigning in the projected elections, is of such importance at the present conjuncture of the class struggle. In opposition to the Communist Party's Popular Front and the "anti-imperialist" coalition called for the Lambertists of *Política Obrera*, the comrades of the PSA are calling on the working class not to cross class lines at the polls.

As for the comrades of the PRT (*Combatiente*), they appear not to have given much thought to these complex questions. They were caught by surprise and now stand in confusion as to what to

do in face of the electoral opening and Perón's return to Argentina.

It is to be hoped that they will make the correct decision before too much time elapses and join in the campaign for a Workers' and Socialist Pole.

17. The Struggle for Legality

In view of the fact that the rising movement of the masses was compelling the government to concede bit by bit on the legal front, the PRT (*La Verdad*) began searching in the most serious way for crevices that could be widened so as to permit the party to function more freely, that is, in a semilegal or legal way. The PRT (*La Verdad*) was the first organization in the Argentine underground to venture opening up semilegal headquarters and to begin taking advantage of the new possibilities that came with the downfall of Onganía.

When it became clear that the ruling class was seriously considering making a shift from military dictatorship to a parliamentary regime, however feeble or transient it might turn out to be, the PRT (*La Verdad*) recognized that this could be utilized to the advantage of the Trotskyist movement if a way could be found to function legally.

At the last congress of the PRT (*La Verdad*), in the fall of 1971, a decision was made to explore all possible avenues. Success was achieved through a principled agreement with the Partido Socialista Argentino (Coral wing) consisting essentially of a summary of Trotskyist positions based on the theory of permanent revolution and a series of immediate, democratic, and transitional demands.¹²⁶ This principled agreement explicitly rejects any blocs with bourgeois formations for electoral purposes and instead calls for the formation of a Workers' and Socialist Pole against all the bourgeois candidates, including the Communist Party's Popular Front (the Encuentro Nacional de los Argentinos [National Meeting of Argentinians]), the Peronists who dominate the labor movement, and other populist alternatives.¹²⁷

Once legality was attained, rapid growth became possible. The first big success was the affiliation of more than 40,000 workers and students to the PSA on the basis of the party's new statement of principles. ("Affiliation" means registration as qualified voters adhering to the PSA.) The results of the affiliation campaign met the requirements for legality at the national

level and in every major city except Mendoza. The party is now in a legal position to run its own slates in the elections.

At a conference of the PSA held less than six months after the agreement was reached, the PRT (*La Verdad*) tendency was established as the majority. The Central Committee was formally organized on the basis of a two-thirds majority for the PRT (*La Verdad*). The real relationship of forces in the ranks, however, is more like ten to one in favor of the PRT (*La Verdad*). The Trotskyist tendency not only controls the new weekly *Avanzada Socialista* [Socialist Vanguard] but all of the fifty headquarters opened up by the party.

The whole thrust of the PSA's electoral campaign is centered on advancing the slogan of a Workers' and Socialist Pole. The concept behind the slogan is to unite the militant organizations, currents, tendencies, and individuals favoring the formation of a class-struggle current within the labor movement, and to do so in sharp opposition to all the electoral variants proposed by the ruling class. That is, the electoral tactic is nothing but an extension of the same work the PRT (*La Verdad*) has been carrying on in the unions and factory committees.

It is impossible to understand the importance of the Workers' and Socialist Pole if we forget the defeat suffered by SITRAC-SITRAM and the difficulty the new oppositionist currents are experiencing in coalescing on a national scale. The central factors blocking formation of a nationwide left wing in the labor movement have been the relative smallness of the vanguard party, the PRT (*La Verdad*), and the deep entrenchment of the trade union bureaucracy. The electoral opening helps cut through these difficulties.

First of all, it has enabled the party to grow rapidly, thus assuring deeper penetration of the unions and making it possible to exercise a more direct influence on spontaneously arising class-struggle currents. The mere fact that the party is able to publish a legal paper to orient the periphery is a great advantage. Upon gaining legality, the PSA immediately opened discussions in factory committees and with class-struggle militants throughout the country to bring them together under the Workers' and Socialist Pole. Although the development has been uneven in different cities, legality has made it possible in general to reach more workers and factory committees in months than was previously possible in years. In addition it has made it possible for the party to become truly national with branches in almost every major city in Argentina.

It would have been a most serious sectarian error to fail to take advantage of the legal opening or to reject taking advantage of the bourgeois elections. It would have paralyzed the growth of the party and put its vanguard role in jeopardy.

The PRT (*Combatiente*), confronted with the new unexpected reality, has simply floundered. At the very time the PRT (*La Verdad*) began probing the new openings and setting up semilegal headquarters, Comrade Maitan was assuring the Fourth International that while turns in the Argentine political situation offering opportunities for legal or semilegal activities could not be “absolutely excluded,” nevertheless they were “improbable.”¹²⁸ The resolution on Latin America passed at the Ninth World Congress forecast a growing trend of repression on a continental scale and gave no indication of what those who were preparing for rural guerrilla war should do in case things didn’t quite turn out as predicted in all countries.

Caught between a sectarian schema and a reality that proved to be richer than counted on, the PRT (*Combatiente*) has tried to straddle. One must take advantage of the legal openings but on the other hand one must continue with “revolutionary war”:

These legal or semilegal struggles, and this use of bourgeois legality, must be inseparably linked to the development of revolutionary war, to the independent building of the Revolutionary Party of the Workers and the Revolutionary Army of the People.¹²⁹

Downswing or upturn in the class struggle, military dictatorship or parliamentary regime—the PRT (*Combatiente*) is indifferent. They have enough to handle with building their “army” and conducting “revolutionary war.”

Yet they are capable of an extra exertion. Without any relation to the process of mass struggle in the country, the PRT (*Combatiente*) suddenly announced the establishment of “rank-and-file” committees to involve the masses. The committees, according to the announcement, are to function legally or semilegally while at the same time supporting “revolutionary war.” Naturally only a limited number of committees have appeared and their size is equally limited. This is generally what happens when sectarians try to set up their own mass organizations instead of working in those already in existence.

18. The Question of Armed Struggle

The "turn" at the Ninth World Congress resulted, among other things, in the comrades of the majority giving up the Marxist concept of armed struggle in favor of Guevara's concept. The Marxist concept has been succinctly summarized by Trotsky in the Transitional Program. The orientation is armed struggle on a mass scale. The training and arming of the masses in this field begins on the most elementary level with pickets. It reaches its highest level in the formation of a workers' militia. Another process occurs concomitantly. This is the disintegration of the bourgeois army, which begins on a propagandistic level among the ranks. Both processes require the guidance of a Leninist-type party. Its presence hinges on being deeply rooted in the masses and growing as the masses mature politically.

Guevara's concept was quite different. In his opinion all of Latin America was so ripe for revolution objectively that all that was needed was a small, determined nucleus to begin armed action on a small scale and the masses would respond. Hundreds of fighters would join the rebel forces, and as these forces grew, the masses would supply them logistically. In a prolonged war, the guerrillas would little by little gain the upper hand and defeat the bourgeois army. Thus Guevara advocated arming a small vanguard group and carrying out actions that would win the sympathy of the masses.

The Marxist concept is that the vanguard, by participating in the daily struggle of the masses and winning them to the program of socialism, can in the heat of mass mobilizations and struggle bring them to the point of engaging in armed struggle on a scale so massive as to sweep over every obstacle.

Clearly these two concepts lead to diametrically opposite approaches to the masses.

The Marxist concept requires concentrating on penetrating the mass movement and gearing into their actual struggles through immediate, democratic, and transitional demands. Each demand is right or wrong at a given moment, depending on the objective situation and the consciousness and mood of the masses, all of which must be carefully observed, studied, and taken into account.

The Guevaraist concept requires setting up small armed units that engage in action regardless of the consciousness and mood

of the masses. (The Guevaraists, of course, regard these as being given, as not changing in any decisive way, except perhaps to become more favorable, so that they can be ruled out as largely irrelevant in considering the military problem.) From this it follows that the armed units can be set up in isolation from the mass movement and without paying much attention to its current leadership (whether reactionary or otherwise), for the masses will come directly to the “revolutionary army,” bypassing all the human obstacles standing in the way of the socialist revolution.

This is one of the deepest and most pervading errors of the Guevaraists. In trying to find a shortcut to organizing the subjective factor in the revolutionary process, they disregard the problem of overcoming the present subjective level of the masses and the grip of misleaders of all stripes, ranging from pseudo-lefts, union bureaucrats, and bourgeois demagogues to the minions of the church. In actuality the Guevaraists assume that the problem is already solved—the masses are already committed to socialism in their minds; all they require is to learn the technique of handling the gun and how and where to get it.

That is why the Guevaraists consider that guerrilla war can be started virtually any time and any place where the government is dictatorial, and with a minimum of forces. (Here they provide another example of where the minimum tends to become the maximum.) The situation is so explosive, as they see it, that this is all that is needed to serve as a detonator. Moreover this holds true for the entire continent. The PRT (*Combatiente*) consequently urges the initiation of guerrilla war in Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, and everywhere else. It complains that most of the sections of the Fourth International are only paying lip service to the decisions of the Ninth World Congress. What is holding them back? Why don't they get going?

No matter what the status of the class struggle may be, whether in an upturn or a downswing, guerrilla war is in order. The permanent prerevolution is not affected by the ups and downs of the class struggle. Thus, in absolute contradiction to the Marxist concept on this question, the PRT (*Combatiente*) frankly asserts:

Armed struggle is not initiated simply as the corollary to a triumphant popular insurrection. It can start as a defensive reaction of the masses and their vanguard under circumstances of a pronounced downturn in the class struggle.¹³⁰

As can be seen, the Guevaraist concept is at bottom a variety of ultraleft sectarianism, which does not mean, of course, that its practitioners are guaranteed against falling into opportunism.

We have considered the results of applying the Guevaraist concept in Bolivia. Let us now turn to Argentina.

The PRT (*Combatiente*) is refreshingly frank about its concept of armed struggle stemming directly from the views of Che Guevara. It regards the situation in Argentina as being permanently prerevolutionary. The task for the vanguard, however small it may be, is to begin armed struggle even though at first the only ones to engage in armed actions are the party cadres. These cadres, it must be clearly understood, lack any mass base. But that is not decisive, according to this way of thinking. The PRT (*Combatiente*), is convinced that once the armed struggle is launched, it will inevitably grow, making it possible to build a mass army and to defeat the bourgeois army on the field of battle.

For the PRT (*Combatiente*), a complex transitional process is not required to arm the masses. It is done gun by gun, through the establishment of independent, autonomous, armed units that then grow "from small to big, starting with a handful of combatants and drawing in on a widening scale the people as a whole."¹³¹

Once armed action is initiated by a small group isolated from the mass movement a terrible logic sets in. The armed actions, the bank robberies, the attacks on police stations, the kidnappings, assassinations, and all the rest, make it virtually impossible for the cadres to engage in mass work, as Comrade González noted in Bolivia. To do fruitful work among the masses requires being with them, sharing their experiences. To engage in guerrilla activities requires a certain separation, if for no other reason than to maintain the underground apparatus and to guard against its being unraveled by the police.

While mass work always entails a certain risk for revolutionists, the risk is enormously multiplied when the organization they belong to declares a private war against the armed forces of the bourgeois state. Proselytizing and recruiting become highly dangerous. While these problems may not be as acute for students or members of the professions, workers are aware of how vulnerable they are as individuals. Rather than join such an organization, they are inclined most often to wait until something comes along in which they can at least feel the strength and power of numbers.

Thus it is not surprising that the history of the class struggle in

Argentina for the past four years shows that the PRT (*Combatiente*) has remained on the sidelines. It “supports” the workers—by giving money, by disarming factory guards, by other actions—but it has never led the workers in a single strike, a single demonstration. It has never been able to organize a tendency in the trade unions.

A crucial question becomes more and more acute for such Guevaraist groups—how to “link up” with the masses. This becomes their central preoccupation. And because they cannot find a solution to this problem they become ripe for disintegration or for a turn toward opportunism. What they fail to see is that their very concept of armed struggle blocks them from forming organic ties with the masses.

They try all kinds of experiments. They try to win the masses by giving them bottles of milk and meat. In kidnappings, they seek publicity of a kind to demonstrate to the masses that they really care. They become paternalistic, referring to themselves as the “army of the people,” the only force that “protects” and “defends” the poor.

Yet none of this seems to solve the problem of how to link up with the masses.

The ultraleft guerrilla line of the PRT (*Combatiente*) is just as disastrous with respect to gaining a base in the armed forces. Following the perspective of building their own army bit by bit, the PRT (*Combatiente*) comrades do not project working within the bourgeois armed forces. Instead, they urge soldiers to desert individually. Thus they repeat an error made by the Bolivian comrades. Here is how they put it:

Nevertheless we know that within the enemy ranks honest but mistaken persons can be found who want to help the people. All those military men and functionaries of the regime who really want to serve the people, who feel that they are part of the people, and who identify with them in the injustices inflicted on them should abandon the enemy ranks. Only in the army of the people can they place all their patriotism and energy at the service of the workers and the people.¹³²

Again, as in Bolivia, the comrades of the PRT (*Combatiente*) have offered dissident members of the armed forces the perspective of joining not an army but a small group of guerrilla fighters.

It should be noted, however, that these comrades do not consider the ERP to be a small group. They refer to it as a “mass” organization. This is not because of its size—it is hardly

larger than the PRT (*Combatiente*) itself—but because the only criterion that must be met to join the ERP is hatred of the dictatorship and willingness to bear arms.

Despite the image of the ERP held by the leaders of the PRT (*Combatiente*), members of the armed forces inevitably see it for what it is—a small group of guerrillas without any real perspective for success in the military field or anywhere else in the immediate future. The civilian battalions have mobilized only partially and sporadically. They have not turned toward the task of dissolving the army. Thus the soldiers in the armed forces do not hear the voice of the masses nor feel their pressure in any direct way. Moreover, the PRT (*Combatiente*) has rejected doing the necessary preliminary, preparatory work among the ranks of the armed forces. It is not following the model set by Lenin and Trotsky in the Russian revolution of battling for the minds of the troops. It calls on the few who may sympathize with its aims to desert.

We reiterate—one of the main errors in Bolivia is being repeated in Argentina!

19. The Kidnappings and Assassinations

The full concretization of the “turn” adopted at the Ninth World Congress came with the kidnapping of Stanley Sylvester, the manager of the Swift de la Plata meatpacking company, on May 30, 1971, the kidnapping of Oberdan Sallustro, the general manager of Fiat Concord, on March 21, 1972, his assassination on April 10, and the assassination on the same day of General Juan Carlos Sánchez.¹³³ The operations of the PRT (*Combatiente*) had reached the level of terrorism.

The Marxist movement from its very beginning has always rejected the use of terrorism against individual capitalists or their representatives. The reason is simple. It disorganizes and miseducates the mass movement as to the correct means of struggle, and provides unnecessary excuses to the enemy for responding in kind, particularly in repressing the mass movement. Only under the conditions of civil war, when the rules of war apply, can terrorism be considered as a tactical adjunct to armed struggle on a mass scale.

The excuse used by the PRT (*Combatiente*) for resorting to the use of terrorism against selected individuals is that a state of civil war exists in Argentina. As we have seen, this is not so. Even the most ardent defenders of the course followed by the PRT (*Comba-*

tiante) are doubtful that a state of civil war actually exists in Argentina. Comrade Maitan would not go beyond saying that it is “at least partial civil war.” (See the April 13, 1972, press release of the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari, Italian section of the Fourth International, on the kidnapping of Sallustro.) Comrade Mandel seems to favor the formulation “a country on the verge of civil war,” to judge from an article that appeared in the April 21, 1972, issue of *La Gauche*.

The kidnapping of Sallustro is a clear case of terrorism. An individual manager is taken by force and threatened with execution (which is carried out) unless a high ransom is paid and certain reforms are granted to a sector of the masses. The gravity of this development for the Fourth International lies chiefly in the fact that this terrorist act is supported and publicly hailed by some of the most prominent journals in the Trotskyist movement.

One of the most forthright statements was made by *Rood* [Red], the Flemish newspaper of the Ligue Révolutionnaire des Travailleurs, Belgian section of the Fourth International.

How do revolutionists view terrorist actions? Why did we condemn the kidnapping of the French Renault official Nogrette and endorse the action in Argentina?¹³⁴ A terrorist action is only “the continuation by other means” of the “normal” activity of revolutionary militants. It is beneficial insofar as it arouses the militancy of the workers, fires their hatred of the established order, and exposes the weaknesses of the prevailing system (e.g., the actions of the Tupamaros).¹³⁵

The Maoist kidnapping of Nogrette in Paris was incorrect, according to *Rood*.

It is still an exception for a worker to be shot down at Renault, even if this is the path the French bosses intend to follow in the future. The mass of French workers do not see this. They still have illusions. As long as the mass of the workers harbor such illusions, terrorist acts can only widen the gulf between the revolutionists and the masses. . . . In Argentina the action carried out by our comrades of the Revolutionary Army of the People has so far had a different result.¹³⁶

To the comrades who edit *Rood*, individual terrorism is correct if the government is repressive and the action is popular. That would make most of the actions of the Russian terrorists “correct.” Why then did all the Marxists of those days oppose them so vigorously? The comrades on the staff of *Rood* should consider this. In any case, they wrote accurately and honestly in charac-

terizing the actions of the PRT (*Combatiente*) as terrorist.

The comrades of the PRT (*Combatiente*), in accordance with the schema of "revolutionary war," visualized the kidnapping of Sallustro as having an impact equal to that of the uprising of the masses in Mendoza.

The development of the war of the people found its point of maximum expression in the kidnapping of Oberdan Sallustro and the victorious struggle of the masses of Mendoza. Each act delivered a harsh blow to the dictatorship of the monopolies, proving its fragility, which compels it each time to resort to more measures of brutal, cruel repression, as its only response to the just demands of the people.¹³⁷

The kidnapping of Sylvester won a measure of popularity for the ERP—at least for a time—since the ruling circles accepted the ransom demands. However, after two months the management of the Swift meat-packing plant reintroduced the same conditions as those that motivated the kidnapping. How little the kidnapping altered the consciousness of the workers was demonstrated by the fact that after applauding the distribution of food and clothing they voted for the reactionary trade union bureaucrats.

The PRT (*La Verdad*) headed an opposition within the plant. The PRT (*Combatiente*) found itself caught in a somewhat embarrassing position. Having set things right in the plant through its own methods, yet having no base among the workers there, what position should it take toward the union elections? Fortunately, the comrades of the PRT (*Combatiente*) made the right decision; they publicly urged the workers to vote for the opposition led by the PRT (*La Verdad*). This is the only time they have made such a move.

In the Sallustro affair, the public attitude toward the ERP was not condemnatory. Yet it could hardly be called enthusiastic. As the spectators followed the events on television or in the press, they displayed little sympathy for Sallustro, although his impending execution aroused emotions. Blame for his fate fell largely on Lanusse, because of his blocking negotiations between company officials and the ERP. But the spectators felt little personal involvement. The kidnapping did not appear to affect their own situation and problems.

The government utilized the kidnapping and execution for its own reactionary ends, that is, as an excuse for new repressive measures that resulted in high and bitter casualties among the

cadres of the PRT (*Combatiente*). Another consequence was the further isolation of the comrades of the PRT (*Combatiente*) precisely when openings for legal activities demanded exploration.

20. Castro on the “Execution” of a Hated Bourgeois Figure

It is worth noting that at least up to now the leaders of the Cuban revolution have held a position on kidnappings and assassinations perceptibly different from that of the PRT (*Combatiente*). In a long speech, made in Havana on March 13, 1967, Fidel Castro explained the Cuban attitude on this subject. The occasion was the kidnapping and assassination of a former Venezuelan government official, Dr. Julio Iribarren Borges, described by the Associated Press as “perhaps the most hated man in Venezuela at this time.”¹³⁸ The circumstances were as follows:

On March 1, 1967, three guerrilla fighters forced Iribarren into an automobile which then drove off at full speed. On March 3, the Caracas police reported that they had found his body. There were three bullet wounds in the back. The police said that they had also found leaflets beside Iribarren’s body signed by the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional.

A leader of the FALN, Comandante Elías Manuit Camero, who was in Havana at the time, issued a press release on March 4 stating that the “execution” had been carried out by his organization as an application of “revolutionary justice.”¹³⁹

“With each application of revolutionary justice,” Manuit continued, “the assassins of the tyrannical government find no lack of echo to their laments among their followers and even among those who pretend to be neutral or in the camp of the opposition. But the people support and hail each one of these actions.”

Manuit did not state what evidence showed that the people had hailed and supported the killing of Iribarren. If he was making an “educated guess,” it was not borne out by any significant rise in recruitment to the FALN.

“We will continue to fight a war to the death against the enemies of our people,” he promised, “whether they are directly or indirectly implicated in the situation existing in Venezuela.”

He ended by affirming how the existence of an “armed vanguard” had rescued the people of Venezuela from a “helpless” position:

None of Leoni's repressive measures, the new suspension of constitutional guarantees, the arrests, the tortures, and the assassinations [of revolutionists] will be of any avail.¹⁴⁰ The people of Venezuela are no longer helpless; they have an armed vanguard, firmly consequent and decisive, that will protect them at all times, avenge their dead and lead them to final victory, which is no other than their definitive and total independence.¹⁴¹

The Leoni government utilized the killing of Iribarren to step up the repression. Constitutional guarantees were again suspended, forty-eight hours after they had been restored.

The Venezuelan Communist Party turned the incident to account in its own treacherous way. Under guise of denouncing the anti-Marxist nature of such actions as the kidnapping and assassination of Iribarren, the Venezuelan Communist Party broke decisively from its previous involvement in guerrilla war, and headed toward resumption of its "peaceful coexistence" line and engagement in the game of parliamentary politics.

The Leoni regime took advantage of the kidnapping and assassination of Iribarren to open an international campaign against the Cuban government, alleging that the deed had been inspired by Havana.

Castro had no choice but to reply. He presented the main facts, including Manuit's statement cited above, and then opened a counterattack. This consisted of a denunciation of the "rightist" line of the leaders of the Venezuelan Communist Party and their opportunistic support of the Leoni regime, plus a scorching analysis of the witch-hunt that had been opened against Cuba.

Castro took up the defense of the Venezuelan guerrillas in no uncertain terms; but he also did something else—he criticized them publicly. This section of his speech is highly pertinent to the subject we are discussing. The full text of Castro's speech can be found in *Intercontinental Press*; the paragraphs of particular interest are as follows:

What attitude must we revolutionaries assume before any revolutionary deed? We may disagree with a concrete method, with a concrete deed; it is possible to disagree with the method of liquidating this former government official. As I said, we know nothing about him—whether he was hated, as the AP says, or not; whether or not he was responsible for measures taken against the revolutionaries.

Our opinion is that revolutionaries must avoid procedures which may give the enemy ammunition: killing a man who has been kidnapped. We never did this sort of thing no matter how great our outrage at the

ferocity of the enemy. And in combat, we knew how to deal with prisoners with serenity.

Revolutionaries must avoid procedures which are similar to those of the repressive police. We do not know the circumstance of this death, we do not know who were responsible; we do not even know whether or not it was produced accidentally, whether or not it was really an act of revolutionaries. Our sincere opinion—and to give one's sincere opinion is a right of any revolutionary—is that, if it was the revolutionaries, we consider it to have been a mistake. It was a mistake to use this type of procedure that the enemy can use to full advantage before public opinion, that may remind the people of enemy procedures.

The entire world knows the behavior of the Revolution, knows that we have revolutionary laws, and severe ones. We have never mistreated a prisoner. We have made strict laws, and our revolutionary courts sentence serious offenders against the Revolution and our nation to capital punishment, but not once has a man been found dead on a highway, in a ditch, or in a park.

The Revolution acts within given revolutionary forms and respects those forms. Even in dealing with people who have committed heinous crimes, we have always insisted upon proper procedure. This is our criterion.

It is perfectly legitimate for a revolutionary to disagree with a deed, a method, a concrete aspect. What is immoral, what is unrevolutionary, is to make use of a given deed in order to join the hysterical chorus of the reactionaries and imperialists to condemn the revolutionaries. (Applause.) If revolutionaries are responsible for this deed, we may give our opinion, but we may never join the hysterical chorus of the hangmen who govern in Venezuela, in order to condemn the revolutionaries.¹⁴²

Let us summarize Castro's position: Revolutionists must avoid procedures that may give ammunition to the enemy or that are similar to those of the repressive police. The Cuban leaders never did that sort of thing no matter how great their outrage at the ferocity of the enemy. In the Cuban revolution, "not once has a man been found dead on a highway, in a ditch, or in a park."

The revolution has its own forms of administering justice, which must be respected and observed, and they are not the same as the forms used by the enemy.

It is perfectly legitimate for revolutionists to publicly criticize a mistaken action or method that does injury to the revolutionary cause. What is impermissible is to "join the hysterical chorus of the reactionaries and imperialists to condemn the revolutionaries."

Castro does not develop his point of view in depth nor link it up with the position on this question adopted long ago by the

revolutionary Marxist movement. He offers only some observations of his own. However, in our opinion, these observations, drawn from the Cuban experience, are weighty and should not be dismissed by our movement, particularly by those who draw much of their thought on armed struggle from Fidel Castro and Che Guevara.

21. Majority Defense of the Line

Whether doubts have ever arisen in the minds of the comrades of the PRT (*Combatiente*) concerning the wisdom of their course, they have not voiced them. The role of the majority has hardly been of a kind to induce rethinking. In fact, the decision at the Ninth World Congress could only serve to remove doubts and to harden them in the mold of Guevarism. The contributions of the majority comrades since then have been of the same nature.

The resolution on Latin America affirmed the position of the PRT (*Combatiente*):

In a situation of prerevolutionary crisis such as Latin America is now experiencing on a continental scale, guerrilla warfare can in fact stimulate a revolutionary dynamic, even if at the start the attempt may seem to have come from abroad or to be unilateral (which was the case with Che's Bolivian guerrilla movement).¹⁴³

This erroneous concept—which should be credited to Che Guevara—led Comrade Maitan in his last contribution to the discussion on Latin America, dated June 23, 1971, to hold that the way the Sylvester kidnapping was carried out showed that the PRT (*Combatiente*) was “linking up” with the masses. Comrade Maitan wrote:

Concerning the kidnapping of manufacturer-consul Sylvester, there is a revealing detail on the comrades' style of operation: they turned over to the press the tape on which they had recorded their accusations against the exploiter and the statements he made in his own defense. This material was used by the press. Those who operate in this fashion are clearly concerned above all with generating favorable responses from broad layers of the population. Moreover the Rosario operation and, more tellingly, the operation carried out at Fiat in Córdoba during the workers' struggle there, demonstrates that our comrades are attempting to link up with the mass movements, integrating their actions into the dynamics of these movements.¹⁴⁴

An important article in the April 21, 1972, issue of *La Gauche*, which met with the approval of the editor, Comrade Mandel, also declared for this incorrect concept of armed struggle. The article, aimed at justifying the course followed by the PRT (*Combatiente*), presented an inaccurate picture of the reality in Argentina:

When the adversary systematically fires on any mass demonstration that displays the slightest radicalism, when he savagely represses any strike and any union that goes beyond reformist objectives, the concrete choice facing the militant workers is reduced in reality to three possibilities: either deliberately restrain the movement in order to avoid a bloody confrontation with the repressive forces; or consider as inevitable a confrontation between unarmed masses and repressive forces armed to the teeth; or, without delay, to get on with preparing and organizing the arming of the masses.

Referring to the Mendozazo, the article stated:

the workers had to confront bare-handed a band of assassins of the people, who fired without mercy on the crowds of workers and on their homes, massacring several dozen persons. But how to improvise on the spot the arming, organization, and tactics of self-defense groups?

The eloquent description is in fact misleading for it indicated that the relationship of forces had reached the point where the ruling class felt it could stage massacres of masses while they were in motion without provoking a national crisis. As we have already pointed out, this was not the situation in Argentina. In fact the alleged massacre of “several dozen persons” did not occur in the Mendozazo. The defense of the course of the PRT (*Combatiente*) was somewhat too eloquent.

The comrades of the PRT (*Combatiente*) came much closer to the truth. Instead of picturing the situation in Argentina as semifascist they admitted, in a front-page editorial written at the same time as the *La Gauche* article, that legal openings had appeared and that the bourgeoisie was moving toward a parliamentary bourgeois regime.

The relationships between the mass movement, the army ranks, and the ruling class were not pictured correctly in the article in *La Gauche*. The masses kept pouring into the streets precisely because they sensed that the ruling class was hesitant about attempting a showdown. The masses also sensed the

hesitancy of the soldiers, who were reluctant to use their guns against their own people.

A vast struggle is going on in Argentina. The struggle involves the loyalty of the army ranks, the level of consciousness of the workers, the allegiance of the petty bourgeoisie. Lanusse is doing his utmost to convince the ruling class to close ranks and help divert the masses from taking the road of revolution. Perón at the age of seventy-seven is being utilized once again. The repression is carefully *calculated*, a fact completely at variance with the picture presented in the *La Gauche* article.

As to the three alternatives—demobilizing the masses, leading them into a massacre, or beginning to arm them—the answers suggested in the article are not without interest.

The first two alternatives are rejected.

There remains the last variant, which is the one proposed and applied by our Argentine comrades. The revolutionists construct autonomous and clandestine armed detachments, which are implanted in the mass movement as it matures and attains higher and higher levels, in order to stimulate the formation of broader and broader armed detachments, which they can fuse.

The reference to “our Argentine comrades” is not, of course, to the Trotskyist PRT (*La Verdad*) but to the Castroist PRT (*Combatiente*). They are the ones putting into practice the “turn” adopted at the Ninth World Congress. You begin with “autonomous and clandestine armed detachments” and these grow, as *Estrella Roja* puts it, “from small to big.” When they are big they are implanted in the mass movement. Precisely how? We are not told. This is understandable. The contradiction between autonomous, clandestine detachments and the organizations of the mass movement has not yet been resolved by either the PRT (*Combatiente*) or the editor of *La Gauche*.

We are compelled to drop back to a simpler question. How will the detachments, small at first, grow broader and broader? The *La Gauche* article graphically describes how desirable it would be to have them grow that way:

At the time of the Mendoza insurrection—where our comrades were not yet implanted—the presence of such armed detachments would have served as an organizing pole for the most advanced elements among the workers, each fighting cell, already trained and armed, becoming the organizer of a larger group of workers.

But just how do you become implanted? And how do the detachments grow broader and broader? Just how? No answer is provided.

The more the *La Gauche* article is studied the stranger it seems. Consider the phrase: “the presence of such armed detachments” in Mendoza. What is meant by “presence”? Should the clandestine, autonomous groups come up out of the underground and fight a pitched battle with the government troops? Should they engage in a hit-and-run skirmish? Ambush a couple of soldiers? When is one of these variants the correct one? Is it always correct to attempt one of them in all the mass demonstrations in Argentina? Who is to decide? Should it be done unilaterally by an organization like the PRT (*Combatiente*), which doesn’t lead the mass movement? Which, in fact, has not yet discovered how to link up with the masses?

Probably with strategists like the editor of *La Gauche* in mind, Lenin wrote a small item entitled “Concerning Demonstrations” that ends with what could be called a moral:

“Precisely because a step like the transition to armed street fighting is a ‘tough’ one and because it is ‘inevitable, sooner or later,’ it can and should be taken only by a strong revolutionary organisation which *directly* leads the movement.”¹⁴⁵

Lenin stresses as prerequisites to engaging in armed struggle the actual strength to lead demonstrations, have marshals, draw the onlookers into the action, approach the troops correctly, and have a strong revolutionary organization. The article in *La Gauche* projects only one prerequisite—the presence of clandestine, armed detachments that can become organizers of larger detachments.

Ironically, while the article affirms “our agreement with the general orientation of the PRT of developing the armed struggle,” it leaves in doubt whether the orientation has really made much of an advance in solving the main problem. It expresses “the hope that our comrades will find the means to link this struggle in the most intimate way to the development of the mass struggle. . . .”

22. Our Argentine Martyrs

We have already considered how the guerrilla orientation heightens the difficulties of proselytizing and recruiting. The swiftness with which a guerrilla group can deploy its forces—one of the main advantages of this type of activity—is counterbal-

anced by its inherent incapacity to move rapidly into openings where fast recruitment becomes possible.

It should be noted in addition that an organization that concentrates on preparing for and engaging in guerrilla warfare experiences a considerable turnover in membership. Besides the requirements in sheer physical stamina, this type of activity, with the accompanying extreme nervous tension, is difficult to sustain over a prolonged period. It is quite true that certain persons find the atmosphere congenial and are attracted by an organization that provides excitement and risks of a high order. Even they, however, become worn out before long. All this makes for a slow rate of growth.

In Argentina this has been registered in the different rates of growth of the PRT (*Combatiente*) and the PRT (*La Verdad*). In 1969 at the time of the Ninth World Congress they were fairly equal in size, with the PRT (*Combatiente*) able to present a plausible case that it held a majority because of shifts to its favor in the voting of the Central Committee of the then common organization. Since 1969 the PRT (*Combatiente*) has been able to preempt the headlines in the bourgeois press and the coverage on television and radio. Nonetheless, the PRT (*La Verdad*) is now unquestionably much the larger organization, much better rooted in the masses and far more influential in the mass organizations (judging by objective criteria such as visible cadres, the running of left-wing slates in the unions, and the size, frequency, and circulation of publications).

The PRT (*Combatiente*), moreover, has suffered several obscure splits that have radically altered the composition of the leadership,¹⁴⁶ two-thirds of the Central Committee that existed at the time of the Ninth World Congress having left the organization or been expelled. The PRT (*La Verdad*), in contrast, has shown stability in its leadership, has strengthened it by drawing in new youthful cadres, and has proved its attractiveness to other left-wing currents through its unification on a principled basis with the Coral wing of the Partido Socialista Argentino.

From the viewpoint of capacity to assemble the "minimum" number of cadres required for a higher level of political activities of whatever nature—and this is a very important if not decisive criterion—the PRT (*Combatiente*) has lagged far behind the PRT (*La Verdad*).

One of the worst disasters suffered by the PRT (*Combatiente*) has been the loss of key cadres at the hands of the butchers of the military dictatorship. This is one of the most painful sides of the

Argentine experience. It has given anguish to the entire world Trotskyist movement.

The minority has felt these losses all the more bitterly because it foresaw their inevitability. We take no special credit for seeing what would happen. It had already occurred with a series of guerrilla groups in Latin America, including a force led by a master in guerrilla warfare, Che Guevara, backed by a state power. The minority felt that our movement had no need to vie with these groups in providing additions to the long list of martyrs.

It is not difficult to give funeral orations or to write eloquently on the spirit of self-sacrifice, the heroism, and dedication to the cause of socialism that motivated the young men and women who were massacred at Trelew or in other dungeons of the military dictatorship, or who were cut down in the flower of their youth in a futile raid.¹⁴⁷ Such exercises find a popular echo in the far left, including sectors that are incapable of either an audacious action or a patient, sustained effort in the daily grind of the class struggle. It is less popular to differentiate politically from the martyrs and to try to drive home the lessons to be learned from their errors. We choose to follow that course even at the risk of being misunderstood for a time. And we propose to do our utmost to change an orientation that involves such a high and unnecessary cost in the lives of cadres.

IV. The Crisis in the Fourth International

Instead of drawing back, the leaders of the majority have continued to deepen their mistaken course. They have elevated the guerrilla orientation adopted at the Ninth World Congress into a virtual principle. As we have seen, the adventures committed in Latin America in the name of this "turn" have been condoned and even hailed by the majority leaders. They have maintained silence over the gravest ruptures from the program, tradition, and practices of Trotskyism while voicing public solidarity with those involved in such a way as to encourage similar violations elsewhere in the world Trotskyist movement.

It is true that they have made some adjustments. As we have already indicated, they have shifted the emphasis from rural guerrilla war to urban guerrilla war. They have given greater recognition to the possibility of "exceptional variants," i.e., mass upheavals in the cities, the coming to power of reformist regimes, and the appearance of legal or semilegal openings that should be utilized by the revolutionary movement.

These concessions have altered nothing in substance. The line remains the same. What has happened in reality is that the guerrilla orientation has become more concrete. Compared with the way things stand today, the line was only *adumbrated* at the Ninth World Congress. It was difficult then for many comrades to see that something of greater importance than a *tactic* was actually involved.

How many delegates at the Ninth World Congress would have voted for that line if it had been presented frankly and openly as it became revealed in practice? Who, for example, would have voted for a "turn" that projected Robin Hood distributions to the poor of commodities hijacked from the rich? Of armed commandos entering plants to stage "workers' meetings" and distribute leaflets at gunpoint? Of tiny armed groups challenging the armed forces of the state without having built a revolutionary party, without the least preliminary work among the armed forces, and in complete isolation from the masses? Of kidnapping individual

members of the bourgeoisie, holding them for ransom, and executing them? Of staking the lives of the best cadres against heavy odds in desperate gambles? Of ultraleft actions that doomed the sections engaging in them?

If these things had been spelled out so that it was clear that they were necessarily and inescapably included in the guerrilla commitment, few, we think, would have voted for it. What dazzled the delegates were the assurances that this course could bring a quick “breakthrough” by applying it to a judiciously chosen country like Bolivia.

One cannot help but wonder. Did the leaders of the majority have a clear conception of how their orientation would work out in practice? Did they hold back from describing this in order not to make an unfavorable impression on the delegates? Or did they simply proceed empirically, trusting to luck? It is difficult to determine. Perhaps Comrade Maitan, the chief architect of the orientation, was not altogether naive. As we noted earlier, he specified a year later: “The strategic perspective the Argentine comrades are following is the one laid down by the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International—elaborated and made more precise by the last two national congresses of the PRT. . . .” And he approvingly cited the adventurous bank holdups, which he held were in “the old Bolshevik tradition,” and romantic distributions of commodities, which were making a “very great impression on the daily and weekly bourgeois press.”

The majority’s persistence in following a mistaken line has proved costly to the Fourth International. The worst aspect, perhaps, is the political deterioration that has set in.

1. Politics Gives Way to the Gun

There is nothing very complex about the theory of guerrilla war. If we leave aside the specifics that make up most of the content of the guerrilla manuals, it boils down to the preeminence of arms. What counts is the gun, once a minimum (very small) group has been assembled. Politics counts for little—and theory, of course, still less. The disdain in which the Cubans held, and still hold, theory and the great lessons of the Russian revolution is well known.

The reason for placing the gun above human reason in this way is simple. It worked. And anyone can tell you about the cases of China and Cuba. The *theory* of guerrilla war elevated these exceptions into the norm and made the old norm, worked out and

followed by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky, the exception. The Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917 by this reasoning must likewise be regarded as exceptions.

What happened at the Ninth World Congress was the infiltration of this pernicious theory into the thinking of the majority leadership. Its prime source was the Castroist movement, specifically Guevara. Its acceptance was part of an adaptation to ultraleftism owing to various causes analyzed in other documents submitted previously in the discussion.

We have seen how the guerrilla orientation worked out in practice in Bolivia and Argentina. Here we need only stress how knowledge of the guerrilla theory helps to clear up such mysteries as the POR (González) joining the reformist and bourgeois Judas goats in the FRA. The Bolivian comrades placed the problem of guns above the problem of politics.

In the case of the PRT (*Combatiente*), we are provided with a striking example of how this primitive theory leads to separation from Trotskyism. Note the logical sequence:

1. Trotsky was a revolutionist, but only one among others, like Mao, General Giap, Kim Il Sung, Ho Chi Minh, and above all Comandante Guevara, from whom the leaders of the PRT (*Combatiente*) have drawn their ideas.

2. The Fourth International has to be recognized as having revolutionary aims, but it includes "counterrevolutionary adventurers." In other words, it is badly tainted.

3. It is dubious that the Fourth International can be saved for the revolution, although it is worth an effort.

4. Other parties like the Albanian, Chinese, and North Korean Communist parties are equally revolutionary. (If they bear the taint of counterrevolutionary adventurers this is not mentioned.)

5. A new International must be built that would include all these parties. (The axis shifts in their direction. After all, they hold state power.)

6. The Cuban Communist Party is hailed. The PRT (*Combatiente*) already subscribes to its leadership, while still retaining nominal ties with the Fourth International.

7. It may be possible to establish fraternal ties with other workers' states besides Cuba. (That's without political revolutions in those countries; consequently the ties would be with Stalinism.)

8. The Kremlin's invasion of Czechoslovakia was, after all, in the best interests of socialism.

This sequence is not a sign of absolute confusion, although

confusion is not lacking. It is a clear indication of a direction of movement—away from Trotskyism toward the theory of a two-stage revolution, and toward Stalinism, with the likely end result being political disintegration. The single stable item in this erosion of principles is the conviction that guns take precedence over politics; and that, of course, is the main source of the erosion so far as theory is concerned. In passing, we can note that this is the key to understanding why the PRT (*Combatiente*) has no difficulty in establishing and maintaining fraternal relations with the most disparate political formations both in Argentina and outside, ranging from the Fourth International to the Cuban Communist Party and with bids to Kim Il Sung and [Albanian CP head] Enver Hoxha. The PRT (*Combatiente*) leaders merely make it a principle not to let political principles interfere with getting on with guerrilla war.

As for political differentiations within the leadership of the ERP-PRT (*Combatiente*), we know little about them. The majority of the United Secretariat has given the world Trotskyist movement no accounting of what happened to the two-thirds of the Central Committee who were expelled or walked out since the Ninth World Congress. What we do know indicates that a more or less steady shift has been occurring. More and more the emphasis is on the planning and implementation of guerrilla actions, less and less on initiating political drives and carrying them through. Those with the best political capacities are being displaced by those most adept at handling the gun.

2. The Deepening Commitment

It is an understatement to say that the leaders of the majority have not stood up against this trend. They have in reality bent to it, thereby helping to spread it in the Fourth International. In short, in cheering on the “Trotskyist” guerrillas in Bolivia and Argentina they themselves are guilty of discounting the importance of maintaining the Trotskyist tradition of placing top priority on political principles.

A good example was the eloquent defense of the ERP-PRT in the April 21, 1972, issue of *La Gauche* with regard to the executions of Oberdan Sallustro and General Sánchez. This two-page article, “Class Struggle and Armed Struggle in Argentina,” ended up by affirming the correctness of the course being followed by the ERP-PRT whatever the incidental errors may have been. It stated that two duties faced the Fourth Interna-

tional. One was affirmation of complete solidarity with the comrades under attack.

The other was "affirmation of our agreement with the general orientation of the PRT of developing the armed struggle, while expressing the hope that our comrades will find the means to link this struggle in the most intimate way to the development of the mass struggle, with the broadening of an organized base among the masses, and with a clear political orientation toward the socialist and proletarian revolution, against any concept of a revolution by stages."

The article, the authorship of which was unidentified but which certainly met with the approval of the editor of *La Gauche*, Comrade Mandel, went on to voice sweeping conclusions as to the efficacy and broad applicability of the guerrilla war strategy:

The lesson to be drawn from the events in Argentina in this regard is, moreover, of a universal importance. The temptation to resort to a fascist regime or to a military dictatorship constantly recurs to the bourgeoisie as soon as the class struggle becomes exacerbated anywhere in the world.

The possessing classes must be made to know that after the experience of the barbarous Nazi atrocities, the young vanguard throughout the world will never again tolerate the most abject form of civil war: that in which one camp is armed to the teeth, and murders, tortures, and oppresses without mercy, while the other camp is physically, psychologically, and politically disarmed, and resigns itself passively to the role of victim. The example of Argentina demonstrates that this vanguard is already sufficiently strong and resolute so that such an ignominy will not be repeated again.

We pause in wonder before the ramifications of what this suggests. Guerrilla war can stop *fascism*? Then what about the course Trotsky advocated in battling against the rise of Hitler? Why didn't he advocate guerrilla war in the style of the PRT (*Combatiente*) or the Tupamaros? Did he, after all, miss the key to the German situation in the early thirties?

And what about fascism in Italy? Lenin, whom the majority comrades have cited again and again as one of the original protagonists of guerrilla war, was still alive. Why didn't Lenin advocate guerrilla war as a sure-fire means of halting Mussolini? Had Lenin perhaps become senile or turned reformist?

Interesting as these questions are, let us postpone discussing them. Right now we want to stress something of much more immediate concern.

What does this alleged lesson of "universal importance" sug-

gest to the young comrades of our movement not only in Argentina, but throughout the world, including Europe?

The answer is that they begin to think, quite logically, that armed actions of an autonomous and clandestine type, such as those being carried out in Argentina, are applicable in other parts of the world. In Europe, for instance, it is quite clear that Greece, Portugal, and Spain have dictatorial regimes that are worse than the one in Argentina. Moreover, the bourgeoisie is quite capable of setting up similar regimes in rather advanced countries, as is shown by the current trend towards establishment of “strong” states.

It should hardly be necessary at this point to prove that this completely logical line of thinking, flowing from the “turn” adopted at the Ninth World Congress, has been going on in sectors of the Fourth International. It has influenced attitudes on many questions which we will not pause to discuss here.

Let us note, however, the criterion publicly expressed by the comrades in charge of editing *Rood* that individual terrorism is a valid tactic under a dictatorial regime if it is popular and if those engaging in it have mass support.

Let us note the admiration and endorsement of the terrorist actions in Québec voiced by some of the European leaders of the Fourth International. “I believe,” Comrade Tariq Ali said on television when asked his stand on the terrorist kidnapping in Québec, “that individual terror is justified when you have a mass movement; when you have mass support inside a particular society, then it is justified.”

The same line of reasoning is apparent in the uncritical view taken of the use of terrorist methods in Ireland, particularly those involving the Provisionals, the more extreme and less political wing of the Irish Republican Army.¹⁴⁸ This uncritical view reflects a failure to understand the Marxist concept of armed struggle and is directly traceable to the “turn” adopted at the Ninth World Congress and to a carry-over of the guerrilla orientation from Latin America to the European scene.

3. From Bad to Worse

The article in *La Gauche* bolstered this trend in the thinking of some of the comrades in Europe, although that may not have been the intention of the editor. Comrade Mandel may have wanted merely to open the pages of *La Gauche* to the most eloquent defense possible of the comrades of the ERP-PRT

(*Combatiente*), who were under heavy attack because of a very bad mistake they had made (although their action was no more erroneous than the entire line they were following).

At the same time the article served to defend the majority line as it had developed in practice. Instead of helping to correct an error made by the Argentine comrades, the editor of *La Gauche* placed himself in the position of being an apologist for it. Instead of helping to rectify the mistaken course adopted at the Ninth World Congress, he helped to fix it all the more firmly by justifying it on a universal level. Finally, instead of beginning to correct himself, he deepened his own error by inducing others to share it.

Comrade Maitan was the chief theoretician in working out the "turn" adopted at the Ninth World Congress. What he attempted was to open up Trotskyism to the theory and practice of guerrilla war. This required finding historic precedents and authoritative backing for it in the works of Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky, an enterprise in which he was ably assisted by Comrades Germain and Knoeller. For a time it appeared that Comrade Maitan might be reconsidering his position in view of the consequences of that "turn" in Bolivia and Argentina. A change by Comrade Maitan would have been a very favorable development, for it would have greatly assisted the work of repairing the damage. It now appears that he has made up his mind otherwise although he seems hesitant about applying the "turn" of the Ninth World Congress to Italy, despite the recommendations of the editor of *La Gauche* on the utility of guerrilla war in struggling against a rebirth of fascism.

The creation of an atmosphere favoring the extension of the guerrilla orientation to areas far outside Latin America has also been assisted, perhaps unwittingly, by Comrade Pierre Frank. He of course is a strong partisan of the "turn" adopted at the Ninth World Congress. He is also a strong partisan of the PRT (*Combatiente*). In his July 26, 1971, letter to the convention of the Socialist Workers Party, he reaffirmed this position: "Concerning the activities of our comrades of the Argentinian section, the P.R.T. and its armed organization, the E.R.P., we don't look at them as being ultra-left. We think that their policy corresponds largely to the present needs of the class struggle in their country."¹⁴⁹

Comrade Frank has been especially concerned that public dissociation from the errors of the ERP-PRT might open the door to "federalism," thus undermining the principle of democratic

centralism. But by attacking the statement made by various sectors of the world Trotskyist movement dissociating themselves from terrorist methods while solidarizing with the comrades of the ERP-PRT (*Combatiente*) against the attacks of the bourgeois enemy, Comrade Frank placed himself in the position of condoning those methods and of helping to spread them in the International.

4. “Democratic Centralism” Dragged In

Comrades Alain Krivine and Pierre Frank raised still another question—the possible violation of the rules of democratic centralism by the minority. In their article, “Again, and Always, the Question of the International,” they called for revising the statutes of the Fourth International at the next world congress. As justification for their proposal, Comrades Krivine and Frank cited some instances that would tend to show that the present statutes are too loose. We do not consider the statutes to be perfect. However, we defer for the present taking up either this question or the pertinence of the instances they cited.

Comrades Krivine and Frank advanced the concept of a highly centralized International empowered to intervene in the life of the sections in an energetic and forceful way. Again, we defer discussing whether such a highly centralized International is either desirable or feasible at the present stage of development of our movement. We want at this time merely to take up the chief point of the article, which was to suggest that the minority has been violating the rules of democratic centralism. Here is what the two authors say:

Up to this point we have taken up arguments that to us appeared to be dangerous. Unfortunately we have to add that since the last World Congress things have likewise gone in practice in a direction opposite to that of reinforcing the International, most particularly with regard to Latin America. On this question, there was a majority and a minority at the World Congress; it was decided that while acting in accordance with the orientation voted for, the discussion would be reopened at a date to be decided on by a plenum of the IEC; this was done at the end of 1970. The comrades of the SWP of the United States supported the minority point of view. We must regret that they did not limit themselves to defending their point of view in the discussion—which was obviously their completely unquestionable right—but also through multiple interventions in the field encouraged those who shared their point of view to pay no attention to the vote of the World Congress and to go against those who were

applying the orientation adopted by the majority. Matters reached greatest sharpness in Argentina. No one had ever thought of asking the members of the "sympathizing group" to apply the line voted for, because they would not have been able to do so. They should at least have had a genuine "sympathizing" attitude toward those who were carrying it out and who were risking their lives each day. In Argentina and several other countries in Latin America, the support of the SWP went, both in the press published under their control and in the interventions of members of their leadership, to groups or to comrades who openly fought the orientation decided on at the World Congress. We will not dwell more on this subject since it is a notoriously known fact and no one can deny it.

Obviously we cannot accept the "argument" according to which the "sympathizing group" of La Verdad had a correct policy, a Leninist concept of party construction, while the Argentine section of the Fourth International is presumably an ultraleft formation. First of all because we do not share this point of view (but this is another subject for discussion). Next because it is not possible for a national organization no matter who it is to take upon itself to decide on the international level who is and who is not Trotskyist. Finally because, in the case in question, it was undeniable that *in intervening against the Argentine section, the intervention in fact was against the decision by the World Congress*. It will be possible at the next World Congress to confirm or to reverse the decision of the preceding Congress, but whoever does so at present on his own authority simply repudiates democratic centralism on an international level, and places in question—more than the "rights" of this or that elected international body—the vote of the World Congress and by that the obligations that this vote imposes; in other words it is the very existence of the International that is put in question.¹⁵⁰

We do not accept the charge that the minority engaged in any violations of democratic centralism in advancing its views within the world Trotskyist movement during the period of discussion on Latin America. And we deny that any violation of democratic centralism was involved in the cases of certain sectors of the world Trotskyist movement who dissociated themselves from the terroristic methods used in Argentina or who disagreed with the public approval of such methods voiced by members of the majority. Leaving discussion of these charges and denials aside, we want at this time merely to draw attention to something else:

What function did the leveling of these charges play in the discussion on Latin America? The answer is that they helped to divert attention away from the very real violations of democratic centralism committed by the PRT (*Combatiente*) in Argentina.

These violations included publicly questioning the revolutionary character of the Fourth International and calling for the formation of a "new revolutionary International." They included

publicly characterizing the Albanian, Chinese, Cuban, North Korean, and North Vietnamese parties as revolutionary organizations, the potential foundation of the proposed new International. They included publicly supporting organizations hostile to the Fourth International as against official sections or sympathizing groups in certain countries. They included publicly opposing the advancement of the political revolution in China and other Stalinized workers' states. They included publicly declaring that the official section of the Fourth International in Argentina accepted the guidance of the Cuban Communist Party. They included publicly putting Trotsky on a level with Mao Tse-Tung, Kim Il Sung, Ho Chi Minh, General Giap, and Che Guevara. They included publicly contending that Trotskyism and Maoism both represented continuations of Leninism, which was finding a higher synthesis in Castroism. They included publicly denying that they are Trotskyists.

What have Comrades Krivine and Frank had to say about these violations of democratic centralism? Not a word. Not a single word either publicly or internally. They have not even informed the membership of the Fourth International that these violations occurred.

Why did Comrades Krivine and Frank remain silent? As the two leaders of the majority most concerned about maintaining democratic centralism and spotting possible deviations, it is hard to come to any other conclusion—they regard the violations committed by the PRT (*Combatiente*) in Argentina as nothing but the unfolding of the real position of the majority and therefore as not only legitimate but wholly within the framework of democratic centralism.

Either that, or they are practicing their own version of "federalism."

5. Blind to the Logic of the "Turn"

It is difficult to believe that Comrades Krivine and Frank could have been aware of the direction in which the PRT (*Combatiente*) was moving politically. Perhaps they, too, were kept in ignorance by the comrades in the majority assigned to follow developments in Argentina. In that case they can be accused of displaying blind trust, which is not a very good sign in top political leaders.

Besides blind trust they can also be accused of displaying a certain imperviousness to the logic of the "turn" adopted at the Ninth World Congress. This is shown by the following extract

from Comrade Pierre Frank's letter to the 1971 convention of the Socialist Workers Party:

The second argument of Comrade Joe, i.e., that the logic of those who today advocate armed struggle for Latin America must lead them to extend it to other countries, has surprised me even more than the first one. [The first one concerned the contradiction between the guerrilla strategy of armed struggle and the Leninist strategy of party building.] Not that the policy of armed struggle is not relevant to other countries. I suspect that the Bengalis, the Ceylonese, for example, are giving some thoughts to armed struggle. What surprised me is first that Joe makes again his "demonstration" with quotations of ultralefts and second that he places himself in tow of these ultra-lefts in raising the question of armed struggle for countries like the USA, Canada, and Great-Britain. . . . For the F.I. there is an *international unity* of revolutionary struggles all over the world, but *unity does not at all signify identity*. The F.I. knows that what is good for Latin America is not necessarily good for the U.S.A. and vice-versa what is good for the U.S.A. is not necessarily good for England or Brazil. Armed struggle as a policy can be determined for a country or a group of countries only after a concrete analysis of the situation in this country or group of countries and is not conveyable to other places. I am really amazed that Joe took for good such a dogmatic argument of ultra-lefts. . . .¹⁵¹

The truth is that the problem of ultraleftism already confronted the Fourth International even before the Ninth World Congress. It came with the big influx of radicalized youth in France in 1968, many of whom were ultraleft, and was therefore inevitable. A romantic view of Che Guevara and his Bolivian adventure was one of the features of this ultraleftism. It was a test of the leadership capacities of the Fourth International to overcome this ultraleftism and particularly the uncritical acceptance of Guevarism. When the majority leaders adapted to the ultraleftism of some of the radicalized youth and decided on a guerrilla orientation in Latin America, it became clear—at least to some leaders of the world Trotskyist movement—that the sickness was contagious and could spread far beyond Latin America, particularly since further recruiting in the radicalized student movement would strengthen this tendency in the International in view of the failure of the majority leadership to give a correct education to new members.

Evidence that this was occurring was abundant enough. It was visible not only in the ultraleft positions on various issues that were being taken by some Trotskyist groups; it could be seen in

the uncritical acclaim given to actions of guerrilla fighters who were in *political opposition* to Trotskyism. Their politics was disregarded; their guerrilla exploits were pictured as exemplary actions. Grave mistakes made by such guerrillas were even pictured in such a way as to suggest them as models. This development has been easy to follow in the coverage given by the *Red Mole*, *Rouge*, and other journals of the movement to guerrillas in Québec, in Ireland, and many other places besides Latin America.

6. France—Ripe for Guerrilla War?

Bearing out the prediction of those who opposed the “turn” at the Ninth World Congress, prominent members of the majority in the Ligue Communiste, Comrade Frank’s own organization, have now raised the question of applying the guerrilla orientation to France. They are in dead earnest. The Ligue Communiste, they maintain, has no other way out of its crisis of perspective.

The proposed new line for the French section of the Fourth International was submitted by Anthony, Arthur, Jebrac, and Stephane in a long article published in the internal bulletin of the Ligue Communiste.¹⁵² The article is of prime interest not only because it represents the most irrefutable evidence of the process set in motion by the “turn” adopted at the Ninth World Congress but because it goes quite a distance in adumbrating the theoretical underpinnings of that turn. In this respect, like the frankness of the comrades of the PRT (*Combatiente*), the article represents a welcome advance in the international discussion. It therefore demands the closest attention and study. Although it will lengthen an already long document, we think it will prove worthwhile to indicate the reasoning of the four authors, particularly since the article is as yet generally available only in French.

As they see it, the Ligue Communiste is making good progress in recruiting but not at such a rate as to be able to realistically envisage a struggle for state power in the near future. In fact the work of extending the organization on a geographical scale is open to question. “But we are quickly going to reach a point where this spontaneous growth is no longer profitable and may even result in a waste of energies.”¹⁵³

In what enterprises other than expanding the size of the organization could the energy of the militants be employed more profitably? We will come to that.

The big obstacle to a breakthrough that would lead to posing

the question of power in France is the thoroughly Stalinized Communist Party, in which it is virtually impossible, the authors hold, to make an impact on the ranks. In the unions, too, the work only plods along, although progress is being registered. The workers simply do not accept the leadership claims of our comrades, and the prospects of rapidly forming a left wing are remote.

To be noted here is the contrast to Argentina, where the PRT (*Combatiente*), to believe Comrades Maitan, Mandel, and others, is immensely popular. The two situations are nonetheless closely comparable in the fact that the PRT (*Combatiente*) has not yet solved the problem of "linking up" with the masses.

What about the possibility of new major upheavals in France along the "classic" lines of a proletarian revolution? The authors, in accordance with the general position of the majority, take a pessimistic view on this. It is excluded, they say, that France will witness another situation like the one in 1936 in which the Left wins an electoral victory accompanied by an irresistible mass upsurge "that we could carry to final victory just by lending a little push,"¹⁵⁴ for that would require the Ligue's being intimately linked with the masses, a possibility closed by the obstacle of Stalinism and the alertness of the bourgeoisie.

While the Ligue Communiste is building along Leninist lines, it is excluded, they hold, that the bourgeoisie will permit it to become "robust and deeply implanted" in the masses. "Thus it would be naive to think that the bourgeoisie, its guard up, its repressive arsenal perfected, is going to permit a really revolutionary organization to grow in its midst beyond a certain point."¹⁵⁵

The situation in France, as these comrades paint it, is roughly parallel to the situation in some of the Latin American countries after all! And what about a repetition of another situation like the one in May 1968 but with the Ligue Communiste in position to take maximum advantage of it? That, too, is excluded, to believe the authors of the article. "Because the bourgeoisie and the Stalinists have drawn their lessons from May."¹⁵⁶

Still another rough parallel can be drawn between the situation the Ligue Communiste will face in the coming period and the situation currently faced by our comrades in Latin America; that is, selective repression: By continuing to face the public openly, "and tempted to maintain this position as long as possible to draw the maximum profit from it," the party becomes more vulnerable to repression by ultrarightist strong-arm squads, who

seek to pick off individual militants and to break up local headquarters.

There is no choice, according to these comrades, but to consider going underground. They hold that “for us . . . there is no absolute distinction between a period of legality and one of clandestinity. We have been given a respite.”¹⁵⁷

Another grave question must be weighed. Unless it goes underground, how can the party hope to maintain its purity, how can it avoid sliding into reformism? “A moment comes when the dangers of legality outweigh its advantages. *This moment is up to us in part to determine. Provided that we have built an organization capable of taking the step. Unless we do this—since being determines consciousness—a completely legal existence will not fail to produce a legalistic consciousness.*”¹⁵⁸

The model these comrades have in mind, apparently, is the purity of the PRT (*Combatiente*), which places guerrilla action above all other considerations, including political principles and the foundations of Trotskyism itself.

They themselves dispose of basic theoretical positions in passing. For instance: The “classical character of October 1917,” which really exists, according to Maitan, Germain, Knoeller, and Hansen, as shown by their writings, “appears to us to be quite mythical.”¹⁵⁹ In all revolutions, including those in the past in Russia, what is involved each time is a “specific military context in which the proletariat is either already armed, or supported militarily by other social forces.”¹⁶⁰ In short, like the PRT (*Combatiente*), the four reduce the highly complex process of revolution to one aspect—the employment of arms—disposing of everything else as irrelevant.

Placing the military question above all other considerations—which is in strict accordance with the “turn” adopted at the Ninth World Congress—these comrades continue: “The proletariat’s military form of organization, born out of its struggles, is pickets or militias for collective self-defense. These are relatively sporadic defensive forms poorly suited to meeting the challenge of the state in the offensive field.”¹⁶¹

Left out of consideration is the proletariat’s strike weapon, a rather amazing omission by comrades who lived through May-June 1968, when France witnessed the greatest and most paralyzing strike action in its history.

That is a mere bagatelle, however, compared to the programmatic implications of this view. What these comrades have done is challenge one of the most basic parts of the Transitional

Program. They have, in effect, denied the validity of the orientation outlined in the Transitional Program on the arming of the proletariat.

They have weighed the question, it is quite clear. And they have come up with an orientation which, while it is at variance with the Transitional Program and everything that Trotsky taught, clearly dovetails with the "turn" adopted at the Ninth World Congress and the way that "turn" was put into practice by the majority in both Bolivia and Argentina:

Rural social forces are much more reliable than the proletariat even in France. "The peasantry is more supple and has greater capacity for evasive action. Against feudalism it was capable of organizing itself in armed columns. The march of the Eighth Route Army in China is the most celebrated example, but this experience goes way back, among others, to the celebrated peasant war in Germany."¹⁶²

Even in the cities this dictum applies. The proletariat cannot be relied upon; the petty bourgeoisie offers the best hope.

The urban middle-class layers, through their social mobility, their financial, material, and technical resources, are providing the essential social base for the urban guerrillas; at least that is what is indicated by the accounts of the Tupas about themselves and by the social base of the ERP.

*If one thus conceives of the revolutionary crisis, not as the blessed moment when the masses enter the fray and arm themselves spontaneously, but as a moment when the thrust of the masses makes possible the victorious conclusion of a process of prolonged struggle, then the preparatory phase takes on all the greater importance for us inasmuch as we have to reintroduce the dimension of revolutionary violence against weighty traditions of legality in the workers' movement.*¹⁶³

At this point, one must ask, haven't we now come close to the heart of the majority position? That is, to drop the Transitional Program and the proletarian orientation in favor of converting our movement into the party of the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie with a corresponding orientation in the field of armed struggle?

Comrades Anthony, Arthur, Jebrac, and Stephane are merely prescribing for France what the "Resolution on Latin America" laid down for Latin America. We have already cited it once; perhaps it is worth citing it twice:

"In fact, in most of the countries the most probable variant is that for a rather long period the peasants will have to bear the

main weight of the struggle and the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie in considerable measure will provide the cadres of the movement.”¹⁶⁴

7. “A Continental Revolutionary War”

With admirable logic, the four comrades continue, posing the question of violence and of party building in terms consistent with extending the “turn” of the Ninth World Congress from Latin America to the continent of Europe.

Holding that the dynamics of the revolution in the European countries cuts across national boundaries, which is of course true, they state: “The dynamics, taking into account the unevenness of development, is one of a continental revolutionary war.”¹⁶⁵ It is merely necessary to visualize a mass revolutionary upsurge in one country of such scope as to threaten toppling the government to see that this brings up the more enduring problem of the “relationship of military forces vis-à-vis the reaction on a continental or subcontinental scale.”¹⁶⁶

That faces the *Ligue Communiste* with a real test: “It is not enough to mumble in front of the CPF [French Communist Party] that the peaceful road is in fact a bloody deathtrap; we must ourselves be capable of defining the practical consequences of our critique.”¹⁶⁷

This brings us to the key point, the *raison d'être*, of the document. “The perspectives that we are able to point out likewise imply a certain type of organization with regard to utilizing violence.”¹⁶⁸

The reasoning in this connection becomes very close, for the authors are quite consciously broaching the sensitive question of party building, of guerrilla action, the contradiction between them and how to resolve it, or, if it cannot be resolved, how to cut through it. And they are doing this in the light of the experience in Latin America and the discussion on this topic in the Fourth International.

As against the Lambertists, who in principle exclude the use of violence by a minority, the four comrades say, the *Ligue Communiste* takes a different view. While systematically propagating the idea of self-defense as a means of mass struggle, “we have not hesitated to resort to violent actions when their relationship to mass work could be clearly established, as in the case of Burgos and Indochina.”¹⁶⁹

It is worth noting in passing that only a single criterion is

advanced—clear establishment of a relation to mass work. Unlike the position of *Rood* in the case of the kidnapping and assassination of Oberdan Sallustro in Argentina, the criteria of the existence of a dictatorial regime and the popularity of the action are not specified. But to continue:

“Within this overall framework, it is necessary to understand and to systematize the dialectics of mass violence and minority violence.”¹⁷⁰

But to conceive such activities, they contend, not as spectacular accompaniments “but as a permanent, essential axis of our activity, entails a series of organizational consequences.”¹⁷¹

These include beginning at once to set up the framework of a special organization for such matters. Moreover, it means conceiving the construction of the party from a different angle than has been followed hitherto.

Anthony, Arthur, Jebrac, and Stephane disagree with Comrade Maitan in his polemic with Hansen on the question of the contradiction between a guerrilla orientation and the Leninist strategy of party building. They are of the opinion that Comrade Maitan evaded the question by asking rhetorically whether Hansen had ever thought of the “construction of the party” being opposed to “participation in a general strike.”¹⁷²

The four French comrades argue that it is obvious that if a group is following

an orientation of armed struggle, and more precisely guerrilla struggle in the case under consideration in Latin America, then this fact affects the whole process of constructing the party. The relationship between party construction, armed struggle, and mass work assumes a particular, complex character. In the main the problem is what kind of mass work, legal or semilegal, in the labor movement and in intellectual circles, can be done by a clandestine party engaged in armed struggle? How do democratic demands and armed struggle fit together? What organizational structures are capable of tying the two fronts together?¹⁷³

The four comrades resolve the difficult contradiction with a single masterly stroke. They redefine what is meant by a Leninist party:

Contrary to what the conclusion of Hansen’s document suggests, the Leninist party is not synonymous with the revolutionary party of the “classical schema,” but of the proletarian revolution in general. And when Lenin spoke of militants who should be tribunes of the people and not secretaries of trade unions, he was affirming the unifying function of

the party. Around and under the leadership of the proletariat, an alliance must be consolidated, uniting different social and class layers that can achieve their aspirations only by this means. This in particular enables the working class to benefit from the military capacities of the peasantry and the urban middle layers.¹⁷⁴

The confusion in this paragraph between the role of a Leninist party and the role of soviets is total; but we leave discussion of this question to another time.

The final consideration raised by Anthony, Arthur, Jebrac, and Stephane, which may be one of the weightiest with them and which shows how directly they have been affected by the orientation of the PRT (*Combatiente*), is that the Ligue Communiste must somehow get beyond the “propagandistic level.” The Fourth International may “find itself quickly disarmed” unless this is done.¹⁷⁵

It is especially difficult, they say, to reply to the “questions raised by certain Latin American sections or the Spanish comrades, if we close our eyes to our own future while holding forth on the whole range of international problems. It would be particularly dangerous to pose questions for other sections that we have not formulated for ourselves. . . .”¹⁷⁶

8. Why They Have Been Attracted to the Way of the ERP

As shown by this document, it is clear that some of the members of the Ligue Communiste—and not the least important sector—have grown impatient over the slow and arduous work of building a party in the Leninist way. They are looking for a shortcut. That shortcut seems to lie in the direction of the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie.

It is clear, moreover, that the role of military technique has assumed priority over the role of politics in their thinking. Their conviction as to the impenetrability of the Communist Party, the sluggishness of work in the trade unions, the inadequacy of proletarian methods of struggle, the messianism they feel in relation to violence, the justification they advance for “minority violence,” the discounting of legality, the imagined virtues of working underground, and their organizational proposals all testify eloquently to that.

Another telling sign of the drift of their ideas is the concept that the bourgeoisie and the Stalinists, having learned the lesson of May 1968, are not going to “permit” any repetition. (As if they

really exercised such control over the class struggle!)

From this, the four comrades draw the conclusion that it is possible to get around the bourgeoisie and the Stalinists by giving up the fight for legality, going underground, and launching something like urban or rural guerrilla war (or a combination) in France. It is curious that these comrades believe that the bourgeoisie and the Stalinists, having learned the lesson of May 1968, will not permit a repetition of that but *will* permit a group of partisans to get away with actions that seriously pose the question of power. Don't the defeats of a series of guerrilla fronts in Latin America, including the front led by Che Guevara, show that the bourgeoisie has learned certain lessons?

The desire of the authors to copy the Tupamaros and the ERP, that is, to apply to France the orientation adopted by the majority for Latin America, is the most serious aspect of the document. To merely project this orientation in a theoretical way for France is an ominous sign of the way the "turn" at the Ninth World Congress has led to the miseducation of a key layer of cadres in the *Ligue Communiste*.

In the absence of strong resistance from the leadership, the danger is mounting that the guerrilla orientation will be put into practice in France. The majority leaders have not been resisting. They have not been opposing ultraleftism; they have been adapting to it, and fostering it.

A single incident will serve to illustrate how real the danger is. Following the Trelew massacre in Argentina, a group set off a Molotov cocktail at the entrance of the Argentine embassy in Paris early in the morning of August 25 [1972] and scattered some leaflets. The action was hailed in the September 2 issue of *Rouge*, which identified the group as "revolutionary Marxist militants." Laudatory comments on the action, signed by *Cuarta Internacional* [Fourth International], presumably the Spanish publication of the United Secretariat, were featured. The use of the name of *Cuarta Internacional* gave the impression that the Fourth International itself was publicly endorsing the planting of a fire bomb in Paris.

The approval of such a substitute for mass protest only pointed up the weakness of the *Ligue Communiste*, that is, the weakness of its ties to the masses and its incapacity to mobilize a significant action. The *Ligue Communiste* cannot be blamed for not doing what it is unable to do. That would be completely unreasonable. But it can be blamed for engaging in a disorienting action.

Much greater than the single incident, however, was the setting of a precedent and the sanctioning and approval of an ultraleft action of this nature. The development corresponds to the logic of the position advanced by Anthony, Arthur, Jebrac, and Stephane; and, naturally, the logic of the guerrilla orientation adopted by the majority at the Ninth World Congress.

To any comrade who has followed the development of the discussion in the world Trotskyist movement since the Ninth World Congress, it should now be absolutely clear what dangers were involved in the “turn.” A significant grouping in the leadership of the *Ligue Communiste* has gone so far as to propose applying the guerrilla orientation to France, with the modifications they have outlined.

This testifies to the accuracy of the analysis made by the minority of the meaning of the “turn” at the Ninth World Congress and their forecast on how it would inevitably become extended both geographically and programmatically.

9. Guerrilla War for the Workers’ States?

Let us once again raise some questions previously asked of the majority, which they have stubbornly refused to answer, either because they are incapable of answering them, or, more likely, because they cannot reach common agreement on what to say.

What about Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union—for that matter, all the deformed or degenerated workers’ states? In advancing the political revolution, does the guerrilla orientation apply to these countries? Yes or no?

If the answer is no, precisely why is guerrilla war excluded? If the answer is yes, then what about the course followed by Trotsky and the Left Opposition? Would it not follow logically that they made a historic blunder in failing to resort to guerrilla warfare in the struggle against Stalinism in the Soviet Union? Even worse, was it not a colossal mistake on Trotsky’s part not to have mobilized the Red Army against the usurping Stalinist clique when he still could have done so?

We venture to predict that these or similar questions will inevitably be raised by sectors of the majority in the coming period, just as the question of applying the guerrilla orientation to Europe, and specifically France, has been raised by a sector of the leadership of the *Ligue Communiste*. Would it not be preferable to attempt to answer these questions now rather than remaining silent until you are confronted by a full-blown ten-

dency among your followers who want to apply the guerrilla orientation to the workers' states and are already impatiently waiting to go into action?

10. Time to Call a Halt!

We think that the persistence of the majority leaders in maintaining the guerrilla orientation in face of the disasters experienced in Bolivia and Argentina promises an even greater disaster for the Fourth International as a whole. Up to now we had hoped that a rectification could be achieved without the organization of a tendency. But this hope has not been borne out. We therefore propose the organization of a tendency on an international scale to give battle to the guerrilla orientation.¹⁷⁷

In our opinion, the platform of this tendency should consist of the following three planks to be advanced for adoption at the next world congress.

1. Reversal of the "turn" made at the Ninth World Congress on guerrilla warfare and its extension since then both geographically and programmatically.

2. Reaffirmation of use of the method indicated in the Transitional Program to solve the concrete problems faced by the Fourth International and its sections in bidding for leadership of the proletariat in the class struggle.

3. Reaffirmation of the basic program, tradition, and practices of the Fourth International as they stood up to the time of the Ninth World Congress, that is, specifically, of commitment to the Leninist strategy of building a combat party to assure success in the coming revolutionary upsurges of the proletariat and its allies.

The Underlying Differences in Method

I. The Origin of the Dispute

The Widening Discussion

In the first paragraph of his latest contribution to the internal discussion in the Fourth International, Comrade Germain offers a succinct summary of the course of the debate:

After emerging initially around the issue of the place of armed struggle in revolutionary politics in Latin America, it has now spread to the issue of the relationship between armed struggle and revolutionary mass struggles in prerevolutionary and revolutionary situations in general, the present orientation towards building revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe, the evaluation of the present period and our tasks as precised by the political resolution of the 9th World Congress.¹

The statement is not exact. The discussion did not emerge around "the place of armed struggle in revolutionary politics in Latin America." It emerged around the "turn" adopted at the last world congress; that is, the adoption of a guerrilla orientation for the Trotskyist movement in Latin America. A minority of the delegates at the congress, standing on the position hitherto held by our movement, argued that engagement in guerrilla activities is a tactical matter that should be left to the sections of the Fourth International to decide in the light of concrete circumstances. The majority rejected this position. By doing that, they elevated the preparation and initiation of guerrilla war by

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sections of the Fourth International into a strategy. A series of questions was thus opened that had to be clarified through discussion.

Accuracy on the origin of the discussion is important. Among other things it helps to avoid false issues. The dialectical method demands that we inquire into the true origin of processes under study, including the development of opposing views in our own movement. The differences at the last world congress were not over the place of armed struggle in general in the development of a revolution but over a specific form of it in a specific area at a specific time; that is, guerrilla war in Latin America in the period following the Ninth World Congress.

Still more concretely, the controversy concerned making guerrilla war the central axis of action for our movement in Latin America. The issue was so concrete, in fact, that at the congress itself a financial campaign was projected to help our comrades open a guerrilla front in Bolivia. This is the true explanation for the warmth of the debate. The question of immediate practice for the Trotskyists in Latin America was involved; and the implications, as has since been demonstrated, went far beyond that.

In locating the origin of the differences, it is essential to also consider the origin of the two tendencies that have formed, inasmuch as this development obviously represents a qualitative change in internal relations in the Fourth International. Other differences at the time of the last world congress such as judgment of the "Cultural Revolution" in China, estimation of the radicalization of the youth, and assessment of entryism *sui generis*, no doubt played a certain role in precipitating the formation of tendencies, but the differences over the guerrilla orientation were decisive. The Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency was organized in view of the failure of the majority of the members of the United Secretariat to recognize the disastrous consequences of their guerrilla line in Bolivia and Argentina. It became clear that a vigorous struggle would be required to win the majority needed to reverse it. In turn, the comrades responsible for the guerrilla orientation maintained that their guerrilla line had withstood the test of events by and large. They announced that they intended to continue to uphold it; and they formed a tendency to defend this position, to block the effort to reverse it, and to make sure of its ratification at the next world congress.²

It is true that they considered the newly arisen differences over orientation in Europe to constitute a point of qualitative change

requiring them to form a tendency. It seems dubious, however, that the criticisms of their resolution on Europe in and of themselves necessitated organization of a tendency or would have led to formation of tendencies in the absence of the dispute over whether the guerrilla orientation should be reversed or continued.

Why did Comrade Germain, instead of indicating the actual origin of the discussion and the specific origin of the two tendencies, offer a broad generalization? The answer will become clear as we proceed.

“Methodologically Wrong and Misleading”

Comrade Germain opens his defense of the guerrilla orientation by ridiculing my presentation of the three main positions to be found in the Latin American leftist movement. Here is what I said:

Let me repeat: There are three main positions in the “great ideological debate”: (1) Those like the Stalinists who believe in or argue for the feasibility of a “parliamentary road” to power. (2) The Trotskyists, who have been defending the Leninist concept of party building and who have been struggling to apply it, an outstanding instance being Hugo Blanco. (3) Those under the influence of the Cubans particularly, who advance the “strategy” of armed struggle in opposition to both the protagonists of a “parliamentary road” and the partisans of the Leninist concept.³

And here is Comrade Germain’s criticism: “It is methodologically wrong and misleading to use the concept of Leninist party building as *an alternative* in debates about key tactical and strategical problems, posed by the development of the class struggle itself.”⁴

I plead not guilty. Comrade Germain is mistaken as to the *origin* of the deviation. Read the last sentence of what I said again. It is *the partisans of guerrilla war* who, under the influence of the Cubans particularly, have advanced the “strategy” of armed struggle in opposition to both the protagonists of a “parliamentary road” and those who advocate the Leninist concept.

How should the Trotskyists answer those under the influence of the Cubans, who make the methodological error of advancing the concept of guerrilla warfare as *an alternative* to the strategy proposed by Lenin? Clearly the Trotskyists should defend Lenin-

ism. The fact that the partisans of guerrilla war pose the question illogically is worth noting but it affects only the form of the discussion, not the substance.

Moreover, in a discussion in our own movement the form in which the question is posed ought not to cause any difficulties. For us engagement in guerrilla war is only a tactical matter—or should be. But this brings us back to the “turn” at the last world congress, in which the majority rejected this position and elevated guerrilla war into a strategy. Not only did that turn disarm our movement in the ideological struggle with those who stand for the *strategy* of guerrilla war and who counterpose it to the concept and course of building a Leninist combat party, it gave rise in our own ranks to champions of the view that you can’t meet the antiparty theoreticians of guerrilla war on their own ground, for it would give the debate an illogical form.

Comrade Germain continues down the track of this false issue. To indicate how wrong it is to pose Leninist party building as *an alternative* he cites four examples:

1. In the debate between the protagonists of the theory of the permanent revolution and the protagonists of the thesis of revolution by stages, should we refuse to support the former and claim that there is a “third strategy,” the “Leninist strategy of party building”?

2. In the debate over what to do about imperialist war, in which the Leninists advocate revolutionary defeatism and the opportunists advocate defense of the imperialist fatherland, should we reject both sides by counterposing the “Leninist strategy of party building”?

3. In the debate over whether it is possible to utilize the capitalist state machinery to install socialism or whether it is necessary to overturn this machinery, should we refuse to side with the latter position and propose instead the “Leninist strategy of party building”?

4. In the debate over how to combat fascism there are three positions—alliance with the proponents of bourgeois democracy against the fascists, neutrality between fascism and bourgeois democracy, and mobilization of the masses behind a united front that takes the fight to the streets. “Should we refuse to line up with that third position, and counterpose another orientation to the three main lines defended in the debate, ‘the Leninist strategy of party building’?” Comrade Germain asks ironically.

The four examples are more than sufficient for us to ascertain Comrade Germain’s general formula: If “A” and “B” are mutu-

ally exclusive, then to propose "C" is ridiculous.

A single example will show that the formula itself is ridiculous: At the turn of the century the terrorists in Russia advocated using bombs, guns, and the dagger as the correct strategy for overturning the system. The Marxists opposed the concept and practice of armed struggle in isolation from the masses. Was Lenin wrong then in advancing the concept of a combat party to provide revolutionary leadership for the masses as the only means of assuring victory? Wasn't he in reality proposing *an alternative* course of action for all those who wanted to devote their lives to the revolutionary cause?

No, Lenin was not wrong. His concept subsumed what little was correct in the terrorist position and rejected what was fundamentally false. So far as Marxism was concerned, the alternative he proposed represented an advance over merely opposing terrorism. To have suggested that this was all wrong methodologically might have drawn a sharp rejoinder from Lenin on the advisability of thinking dialectically.

How could Comrade Germain, who is renowned for his polemical capacities—and rightly so—come to use such puerile arguments based on cases drawn from nowhere but his imagination and having but little in common with reality? The answer is that he has assumed the defense of an erroneous line and this inevitably affects the quality of his polemics.

Pursuing this false issue still further, Comrade Germain presents three additional arguments:

1. Separate and apart from the question of party building, there are other questions like permanent revolution and united-front tactics against fascism that arise in the course of the class struggle to which answers must be found, and you can't evade them by counterposing Lenin's strategy of party building.

2. "There is no such thing as a 'Leninist concept of party building' separate and apart from programme, correct strategic orientation and correct tactics."

3. It is a serious disservice to Leninism to counterpose the Leninist strategy of party building to needs of the objective revolutionary struggle such as the organization of pickets in a strike.

The three arguments have very little to do with the key issue in dispute. Nevertheless, it may be worthwhile to answer them—but in a different order for the sake of convenience.

On 2: Of course there is no Leninist concept of party building separate and apart from program, orientation, and tactics. Was it

wrong for me to assume that this was understood by the cadres who are participating in the international discussion?

On 1: Of course answers must be found to questions that arise in the class struggle. These are found through correct analysis of the reality and applied through a correct course of action. This holds true even for questions as broad as the permanent revolution, which are ultimately resolved in the class struggle. The main purpose of the Transitional Program is to help us in that.

On 3: Of course it would be idiotic to counterpose the building of a Leninist-type party, which is a long-term task, to the immediate need to organize pickets in a particular strike. Just the same that doesn't prevent us from recruiting workers to the party during a strike, or from explaining that syndicalism is inadequate to topple the capitalist system.

Now let me ask a question. Does it follow from these elementary propositions that we must perforce adopt a strategy that throws Trotskyists into guerrilla actions in isolation from the masses, as was the case with the Bolivian and Argentine sections in carrying out the line of the last world congress?

To find rational or semirational grounds for orienting small Trotskyist groups into guerrilla action, something more substantial than the alleged lack of logic in counterposing party building is required.

For example, you might work up a convincing case for the guerrilla orientation if you can show that the pattern of the Cuban revolution will in all likelihood be duplicated. Comrade Germain has been repeatedly challenged to state whether he holds this view. Up to now he has successfully evaded giving a clear answer. Instead he has given us one-sided references to the guerrilla experience in Russia in 1906 and to the partisan struggle in Europe against the Nazis during World War II.

Or you might work up a case for the guerrilla orientation if you think that all is lost and that there is no choice except that of a handful of heroic revolutionists going to their martyrdom, guns blazing, in hope of detonating a civil war. This concept, projected by Comrade Germain as a certain reply to any new attempted fascist take-over in Europe,⁵ may well accord with the ultimate logic of the turn taken at the last world congress. It is not, however, very useful in trying to solve the problems that actually face the Fourth International. A number of dedicated revolutionists sacrificed their lives in Brazil in isolated guerrilla engagements with the police of a brutal military dictatorship. Despite their heroism, we are still faced with the political question, what

should be done next in Brazil? Should we repeat their experience? Or concentrate on the necessary task of building a combat party capable of leading the masses to victory when they again move forward?

We are back to where this line of argument began.

Before passing to another topic, I should like to call attention to the strange example that Comrade Germain uses to bolster one of his arguments:

Those of the alleged "supporters of the Leninist concept of party building" who, in February-April 1917, were ready to ally themselves with the Mensheviks and didn't understand the need to fight for Soviet power, would have led the Russian revolution to certain defeat. That is why the Leninist strategy of party building, far from being counterposed to the orientation towards armed struggle today, implies the need to adopt that orientation. Without such an orientation, your "Leninist strategy of party building" is in danger of becoming what it did become in the hands of Kamenev, Molotov and Stalin before February and April 1917: an obstacle and not a motor on the road towards revolutionary victory.⁶

What does the policy adopted by Kamenev, Molotov, and Stalin in February-April 1917 have to do with the situation faced by the Fourth International today, that is, the disasters suffered in Bolivia and Argentina because of the guerrilla orientation adopted at the last world congress?

Does Comrade Germain really believe that our movement, like the Bolsheviks in Russia in 1917, stands on the verge of taking power in Bolivia and Argentina? Does he actually believe that the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency—like Kamenev, Molotov, and Stalin—stands in the way of such a victory?

Note what Comrade Germain leaves out in advancing his analogy. Trotsky taught us that the origin of the crisis in the Bolshevik Party in 1917 lay essentially in the inadequacy of Lenin's theory—he had not accepted the theory of the permanent revolution. Does Comrade Germain really believe that the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency does not accept or does not understand the theory of the permanent revolution?

For the sake of hygiene in the discussion it would have been preferable for Comrade Germain to have explained his analogy more fully; otherwise the reference to Kamenev, Molotov, and Stalin might be taken as a wrong and misleading insinuation.

The Art of Turning the Tables

The best defense, it is said, is an attack. And the best attack, Comrade Germain seems to hold, is to try to turn the tables. For a polemic this is no doubt an excellent game plan. Whether it helps to clarify the issues is something else again.

A good instance is his effort to show that the Socialist Workers Party has changed its line on guerrilla warfare. He quotes from an article I wrote on the OLAS conference in 1967 and from the statement of basic principles for reunifying the world Trotskyist movement, which was prepared by the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party in 1963 and adopted at the Reunification Congress that same year. "One wonders," he argues, "why what was true in the spring of 1963 and the autumn of 1967 ceased to be true in spring 1969, not to say in spring 1971. . . ."

If Comrade Germain were accurate in his contention, the following conclusion could hardly be avoided: At the last world congress the majority made no turn. Instead, it was the minority that made a turn. The majority did nothing but hold fast to the pre-congress position of the Socialist Workers Party on guerrilla warfare.

However, this is perplexing. How are we to explain the course followed by the leaders of that majority? They have taken credit for "the turn of the Ninth World Congress," boasted about it, explained in polemical articles how it differs from the *focoist* concept of Régis Debray and others, hailed the PRT (*Combattiente*) for providing a model of it in practice, and sharply criticized the minority for "not understanding" the innovation or for resisting it and failing to apply it. The tables have not only been turned; they have been kept spinning in the air.

To help bring things down to earth, let us go back further—back to 1962. Why Comrade Germain did not start there remains a mystery.

At that time Hugo Blanco was engaged in the work among the peasants of the Cuzco region of Peru that brought him worldwide recognition and won general acknowledgment of the potentialities of the Trotskyist movement in Latin America. Meanwhile in Lima, the Peruvian section of the Fourth International, adhering in those years to the International Committee, was doing its utmost to rally backing for the contingent operating among the peasants. The Argentine comrades, stretching their resources to extend fraternal aid, sent able organizers and dedicated young

cadres. The team in Lima made headway but were not able to mobilize forces on the scale required. The obstacles were particularly great because of the hostile influence wielded by the Stalinists in the labor movement and in the Left.

The main difficulty, of course, was the lag in the class struggle in the cities. The ferment in the countryside was deepening, bringing tens of thousands of peasants into action and providing a fertile ground for revolutionary organizing activities. From a distance it was impossible to follow events in detail but it became clear before long that the peasant movement was developing explosively. In Lima, however, the working class remained relatively quiescent.

The correct tactic for our comrades in Lima was to dig in, continually publicize the peasant actions and their meaning to the best of their ability, seek to broaden their base in the working class, and above all carry on a sustained battle in the Left for our positions. Unfortunately our comrades became impatient over the slowness and the difficulty of this laborious work.

In the spring of 1962, under the leadership of one of the comrades sent from Argentina, Daniel Pereyra, they decided to take a shortcut; namely, expropriate funds from a bank. Nahuel Moreno argued against the adventure, but could not dissuade them. They split from the movement and set up an urban guerrilla group, which they named Túpac Amaru.

In New York our first knowledge of this came when we received a batch of clippings from the Lima newspapers. The Túpac Amaru had staged the biggest holdup in the history of the country. By mischance the police stumbled upon the guerrillas within a few days and after a shootout captured all of them and part of the expropriated funds. The guerrillas were subjected to torture and thrown into prison.

The case created a nationwide sensation, for the main participants were university students from respectable families with excellent records in their studies. The boldness of the bank holdup, the huge sum involved, and the fact that they had carried out the expropriation for idealistic political reasons won them universal sympathy.

Immediately after the holdup and before they were captured they sent an open letter to the press explaining their action. Here are a few paragraphs that will indicate the bearing of this case in our current discussion:

The July 26 Movement in its time gave an example to all the peoples of

America of how to rise against a regime that exploited the country. Fidel's uprising was carried out against all the opinion of the traditional left which held that it was necessary to wait until the masses rose and took up arms. Various peoples of America are already following Fidel's footsteps, "replacing the arms of criticism with the criticism of arms." They are Venezuela, Colombia, Guatemala and Paraguay.

In our country the traditional left—Communists, Socialists, Trotskyists—with distinct variations, in whose ranks some of us have fought so that we gained close knowledge of their people and their line, continue to hold the same opinions as in Cuba before the defeat of Batista: now is not the time for action.

In order to propose passivity and coexistence in face of the regime, they advance various pretexts: the FLN [National Liberation Front of Peru] and the Communist Party say that objective conditions do not exist for the revolution.

The Socialists and the Social Progressives have a positive program.⁷ But in participating in the current election they bring doubts to mind. All those who utilize revolutionary declarations to win seats in parliament, are they revolutionists or opportunists?

The FIR [Revolutionary Left Front], the Trotskyists and the various workers parties, even having Trotskyist leaders, make brilliant and revolutionary analyses of the present regime but believe that you have to wait until the masses go into action by themselves while we, the revolutionists, stay with them and lead them.⁸ When will they realize that the masses of our country at the present time are not ready for struggle and that consequently they have to be given an example?

All these reasons brought us to the conviction that it was necessary to constitute a new organization which we have called TUPAC AMARU and whose first manifestation you already know.⁹

As can be seen, there are striking similarities between this position and that of the PRT (*Combatiente*) in Argentina—and not by accident, as we shall see.

In the same issue of the *Militant* in which this letter appeared, a rather lengthy editorial explained the position of the Trotskyist movement on such actions. I happened to be the author of the editorial. Here are some paragraphs:

While the bank holdup occurred as a political act during an election, the real background appears to be a certain rise in the peasant movement. In the past months reports have appeared of land take-overs, one of them involving a skirmish in which Peruvian army forces had to abandon the area. How extensive and profound this movement is, we are unable to judge.

The Peruvian magazine *Vanguardia*, in its May 8 issue, sought to connect the bank affair with the peasant forces headed by Hugo Blanco.

In noting such reports the June *Hispanic America Report*, published by Stanford University, said that the money was destined for Blanco's movement. It described Blanco as a "Peruvian Trotskyist who had studied in Argentina and who was reportedly operating in the valley of Convención in the department of Cuzco."

Although the Peruvian Trotskyist movement is split into various currents, all of them would probably agree with the attitude toward the holdup expressed by Ismael Frias, editor of *Obrero y Campesino*.¹⁰ In a statement published in the May 2 *Expreso*, he held that any action undertaken in isolation from the masses is an "adventure," but at the same time he offered his "full moral solidarity to those who act in accordance with revolutionary motives even though we reject their methods as mistaken."

Actions of this kind, in which anger at social injustice and fervor for change lead inexperienced fighters to attempt to bypass an unfavorable relation of forces, are bound to occur where objective conditions for revolution are as ripe as they are in Peru and where a powerful mass revolutionary-socialist party does not yet exist.

But the revolutionists will learn from their mistakes—costly as they may be—and turn more and more toward what is most essential: the construction of a party in which youthful enthusiasm and energy, the burning wish to win freedom, equality and the new world of socialism can find the means adequate to the task.¹¹

The inclusion of the opinion of Ismael Frías in this editorial was deliberate. He was an adherent of the International Secretariat. He was also in opposition to Posadas, as were Comrades Germain, Maitan, and Frank. Thus what he said represented the authentic position of that wing of the International Secretariat. In this way, I sought in the editorial to indicate the common position of the world Trotskyist movement on this question.

The adventure engaged in by the Túpac Amaru was a total disaster. The entire leading team of the Trotskyist organization adhering to the International Committee was put out of commission. The promising beginnings of their work were destroyed. The sensational publicity and widespread sympathy gained by the youthful participants in the holdup were outweighed by the cutting off of their links with the mass organizations. Instead of being in position to mobilize greater help for Hugo Blanco, they themselves were in dire need of help.

Worst of all, the immediate effect was to still further isolate the Trotskyist revolutionists in the countryside from contact with the workers' movement in Lima. Finally, the adventure facilitated the efforts of the government to crush the peasant rebellion and to capture Hugo Blanco. The Peruvian section of the Fourth

International was smashed for the time being. Because of a peculiarity in Peruvian-Argentine relations, Comrade Moreno in Buenos Aires was also caught up in the judicial process and had to serve time in prison on charges of involvement in the Túpac Amaru action because of his prior knowledge of what was planned.

The editorial in the *Militant* expressed the hope that the lessons would be learned by the revolutionists. This proved to be overly optimistic. Not all of those involved learned from the costly mistake.

Upon being released from prison in September 1967 after serving five years, Daniel Pereyra returned to Argentina and soon began pressing there for adoption of a guerrilla orientation like that of the Túpac Amaru. Part of the responsibility for splitting the Argentine section in 1968 over this issue no doubt rests with him. He succeeded in obtaining a majority in the Central Committee under circumstances that still remain unclear and came to the Ninth World Congress as the representative of that majority, the PRT (*Combatiente*). There his success was phenomenal. Not only did he gain recognition of his faction as the official Argentine section of the Fourth International, but together with Comrades González and Maitan he led the battle for adoption of the guerrilla orientation that constituted the most important element in the "turn" at the congress. No doubt it was a great personal satisfaction to him to see the general line of the Túpac Amaru adopted by the Fourth International.

Since then Comrade Pereyra has either split from the PRT (*Combatiente*) or been expelled. I do not know the circumstances of this latest turn in his political fortunes. Perhaps Comrade Germain will report them in his next contribution and let us know if he expects Comrade Pereyra to stand at his side at the next world congress to help him defend the guerrilla orientation as he did at the last world congress.

The Túpac Amaru case was an important object lesson for the Fourth International. It showed in the most concrete way how dangerous adaptation to the Cuban line could be. There was no question about adaptation being involved inasmuch as the comrades were completely honest about their views and expressed them quite frankly, as can be seen from the excerpt from their open letter quoted above.

Still more important was the fact that the case provided a living example of how carefully the tactical application of guerrilla actions must be weighed. At the very same time that we

supported Hugo Blanco's course (despite whatever incidental errors may have occurred), we publicly opposed the action carried out under the leadership of Daniel Pereyra in the very same country—and even though the action was sincerely intended to help Hugo Blanco. The reasons for this difference were absolutely clear. The actions that occurred under Hugo Blanco emerged out of the mass struggle itself. The action taken by Daniel Pereyra was the action of a small group isolated from the masses and trying to substitute for the masses.

This view was held at that time not only by the SWP and other Trotskyist organizations in sympathy with or supporting the International Committee, it was held by the International Secretariat; and its adherents had no hesitation at expressing their opinions on the subject publicly, as was shown by the statement of Ismael Frías.

The Túpac Amaru case was still very much before us at the Reunification Congress in the following year (we had the problem of defense work in relation to those involved). The position of our movement on such adventures was so clear and so well established that it did not occur to anyone that it had to be included in the point in the reunification document. As a result only what appeared to be new in a broad historic sense was written down in this brief statement of principles.

In light of the "turn" adopted at the last world congress, it must now be concluded, it appears to me, that the point should be expanded so as to include a clear indication of the *limitations* of guerrilla warfare.

As for the article on the OLAS conference quoted by Comrade Germain, one can only note that he is really straining in his effort to score a point. In a dispute between those who believe in peaceful coexistence and a peaceful parliamentary road to socialism and those who believe that such a road is illusory, we of course side with the latter even if their concept of armed struggle is not Leninist and they advocate the strategy of guerrilla war as a panacea. In a struggle against the reformists and opportunists it is completely principled to make a bloc with the strategists of guerrilla war, and all the more so if they appear to be learning something positive from their difficulties and setbacks, and are willing to give us a hearing. The elementary condition for such a bloc is maintenance of the independence of our own movement; above all *not* succumbing to guerrillaism or adapting to it.

Thus in the final part of the article on the OLAS conference, I offered some criticisms of the Cubans, singling out in particular

their depreciation of theory and dismissal or lack of understanding of the role of a Leninist party. Comrade Germain chooses to ignore these criticisms, perhaps because it would upset his contention that the Socialist Workers Party has changed its position on guerrilla war and its relation to party building.

Please note something further. Didn't Comrade Germain just get through arguing that in the debate between those who think it possible to utilize the capitalist state machinery to install socialism and those who think it necessary to overturn this machinery that we should side with the latter position? Wasn't this done in my article on the OLAS conference? Wasn't this one of the main purposes of the initiative taken to send me to the conference as an observer? What happens then to Comrade Germain's polemical construction? The article on the OLAS conference, which he himself cites, intending to bolster a different point, shatters his contention that bringing forward the concept of Leninist party building in a debate with advocates of the strategy of guerrilla war is "methodologically wrong and misleading."

I will return later to the OLAS conference and our efforts in 1967 to take advantage of any possibilities it might offer to advance the Leninist concept of party building and thereby the successful extension of the Cuban revolution.

Hugo Blanco's Analysis

Comrade Germain appeals to the "forgotten Peruvian example." The analysis in Hugo Blanco's book *Land or Death*, he claims, is proof of the correctness of the guerrilla orientation adopted by the majority at the Ninth World Congress.

But there is another side to Hugo Blanco's story, which the comrades of the minority are much too eager to overlook. Although the upsurge of the peasant movement in the valley of La Convencion was still regionally limited; although the overall situation in Peru was far from equalling the type of prerevolutionary situation characteristic of Bolivia or Argentina; although there was no question yet of a generalised mass upsurge of the working class in the country, *armed confrontation and armed struggle inevitably grew out of this even limited example of upsurge of the peasant movement*. Can one find a better confirmation of the key thesis we have constantly and consistently defended since the 9th World Congress?¹²

Does Hugo Blanco's analysis confirm the guerrilla thesis

adopted by the majority at the Ninth World Congress? Hugo Blanco, for one, does not think so.

Comrade Germain singles out various paragraphs from *Land or Death* which he advances as incontrovertible evidence in behalf of his arguments. The paragraphs deal with but a single phase of the developments in the Cuzco region—the phase in which the mass upsurge, involving hundreds of thousands of peasants, reached such size and intensity as to reach the point of qualitative change, i.e., the point where it was not only feasible but necessary to open armed struggle. The Trotskyists had succeeded in rooting themselves in the masses, had organized a broad, militant peasant union structure, in which they had established themselves as key leaders. They had participated in revolutionary actions undertaken by huge contingents of peasants—seizures of land. Organs of dual power had begun to appear in the countryside. The tactical use of guerrilla war thus occurred in the context of a mass upsurge in which the Trotskyists had won central leadership.

Comrade Germain overlooks all this. Perhaps with good reason. *It bears out the thesis advanced by the minority at the last world congress.*

Moreover, the example stands in complete contrast to the example set by the POR in Bolivia and the PRT (*Combatiente*) in Argentina, where our comrades were not rooted among the masses, did not stand at the head of mass organizations, and were in fact completely isolated from the masses.

Hugo Blanco advanced some criticisms of his own course in this struggle. The principal one was failure to pay sufficient attention to party building. This failure became one of the main weaknesses of the Peruvian movement, helping materially to block it from advancing to a higher stage. Comrade Germain plays down this self-criticism. Again not without reason. It confirms the key point made by the minority at the last world congress on the priority of party building.

There is more to come. Besides overlooking the context of the guerrilla struggle that broke out in the Cuzco region, Comrade Germain is completely silent about the Túpac Amaru experience. This is the true “forgotten Peruvian example.”

It is strange that Comrade Germain should have forgotten it. Let us grant that the account in the *Militant* in 1962 had faded from memory; what about the references to it in *Land or Death*? To remind Comrade Germain of this, and to call attention to

another side of Hugo Blanco's analysis, let us turn to the book.

The organization of the Frente de la Izquierda Revolucionaria (FIR), Hugo Blanco states,

gave serious impetus to the preparation for armed struggle. Although preparation had begun earlier, it was clearly becoming urgent to step it up in view of the advanced level of the class struggle in the countryside.

Unfortunately, the great deficiency continued to exist: no efforts were made to consolidate the peasant vanguard . . . into the party or into the FIR, although a few members were recruited incidentally.

The feverish intensification of work without the existence of a solidly formed party required supplementary funds. In Lima, the FIR devoted its efforts to the hasty and indiscriminate recruitment of members. Almost immediately, those new members—untested in struggle—were assigned to such a delicate task as bank expropriations to obtain the required funds for the sharpening of the class struggle in the countryside.

During this whole stage, the putschist deviation of Pereyra, Martorell, Aragón,¹³ and other comrades, together with my syndicalist deviation, was leading us unconsciously, although no less perniciously, to neglect the great task: the formation and consolidation of the party, primarily on the basis of the mass work that had been developed.

My syndicalist deviation was by then so strong that I was incapable of directing assistance for the formation of the party in the countryside.

We consider that there is nothing more moral than to retrieve, for the people's liberation, the wealth stolen from them by the exploiters. Nevertheless, the expropriations that we carried out were premature, in that we did not have a solid party apparatus that would guarantee their effectiveness, and we had only untested militants, hastily recruited, to carry them out. Tasks of this nature can be successfully carried out only by comrades of iron, of a fully tested moral fiber.

After the expropriations, what we had anticipated actually happened: a fierce repression (jailings and persecution) against us that caused a general collapse—the Cuzco FIR, the national FIR, our expropriating apparatus, our military apparatus—everything, except for the one existing solid thing: the peasant movement. Although they could not jail me, thanks to the protection of the peasant movement, my activity was severely curtailed because of the repression.¹⁴

Hugo Blanco characterized the guerrilla actions carried out by Daniel Pereyra as "putschism." A more accurate term, I believe, would be "guerrillaism." From our vantage point today it might be even more to the point to call it an anticipation of the guerrilla orientation adopted by the majority at the Ninth World Congress. However that may be, Hugo Blanco offers some instructive comments on Daniel Pereyra's course of action in relation to the broad context of the Cuban revolution and its impact on the

thinking of revolutionists in Latin America. In view of Comrade Germain's recommendation of Hugo Blanco's analysis, the conclusions reached by Hugo Blanco on this point should certainly be made part of the international discussion:

The Cuban Revolution opened a new chapter in Latin America. It was a tremendous blow not only to imperialism and all exploiting classes, but also to reformism of all varieties. It proved that the Latin American revolution is a socialist revolution, that this revolution will not be made by peaceful means, and that it is indeed necessary to destroy—not reform—the capitalist system.

In this respect, it signified a reaffirmation of Marxist principles, which the Trotskyists had defended during the bleakest periods of the world revolution. In this respect also, it signified a milestone with regard to the tactic of guerrilla warfare, especially valuable for the colonial and semicolonial countries.

Other positive milestones can certainly be enumerated with respect to the first socialist revolution in our hemisphere. Nevertheless, along with its invaluable positive influence on America and the world, it had some negative effects in the radical movement. Of course, the Cuban Revolution is not to blame for this, but rather that we revolutionaries lacked dialectical maturity and were not equal to the interpretation of such a sweeping and contradictory process.

The Latin American Trotskyist movement, enthusiastic as it was about this revolution which confirmed the theory of the permanent revolution, could not remain immune from the negative influences, and was also affected by them in various degrees. We can enumerate the most important characteristics of this negative influence: the underestimation of the Leninist principle of constructing a Bolshevik-type party as a fundamental instrument for making the revolution; the underestimation of the transitional program, substituting for it the so-called strategy of armed struggle, or even the strategy of guerrilla warfare; the substitution of audacious actions by a courageous group for mass actions.

I think, although some comrades do not agree with this estimation, that even the leadership of the Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyism (SLATO) felt this influence, although it was mitigated by the theoretical level of this leadership.

This tendency was stronger in Comrade Pereyra, who was sent to reinforce our work. For this reason, along with the positive accomplishments of his work, there was the negative influence of his putschist pressure, which is the name given to this deviation because of its characteristic reliance on the blows struck by individual hands.

When I speak of a putschist deviation, I am not referring of course to our armed struggle and its preparation, to the militias and the guerrilla bands. All this comes well within our conception. I believe that our activity in this area was, in general, correct.

Some activities that can be pointed to as examples of putschist pressure are: the bank holdups; the lack of emphasis on building the party; certain attempts to hasten artificially the process of party-building in some instances in the months before the fall of Pereyra; a lack of extended analysis of each phase. Fortunately, we did not succumb to the pressures for an assault on general military headquarters in Cuzco, nor to other extreme expressions of this current.

The credit for reacting first and beginning a serious struggle against this deviation goes to Comrade Nahuel Moreno, the principal theorist of Latin American Trotskyism.¹⁵

Comrade Germain stresses that Hugo Blanco, "drawing the balance-sheet" of his experience in the Cuzco area, "comes TODAY" to the conclusion that it was correct to choose the armed confrontation there "even if all the guerrillas had been massacred and the repression against the peasants had been even more severe."¹⁶

To complete the record here is Hugo Blanco's opinion TODAY on guerrilla actions carried out in isolation from the masses:

In principle, we are not against such activities as assaults on banks and police headquarters; they are a part of the revolutionary struggle, of the war of the people against their enemies. But more precisely, they must be the fruit of the growing class consciousness of the people. When the maturity of consciousness of the masses brings them to understand the necessity of these activities, it is correct to engage in them. The secrecy and discretion that are absolutely essential in such cases does not contradict this; for we do not mean to say that the masses must be informed before all actions, but that these actions must be carried out when the masses have arrived at an understanding of their necessity and regard them as their own acts, as *their* forms of struggle.

This applies not only to the question of whether such activities are necessary, for in general all of them are always "necessary," since the revolutionary movement always needs money and arms. It applies fundamentally to the political impact of such acts. If they were done when the people understand their necessity and they are understood by the masses as activities emanating from themselves, they fulfill above all the positive function of raising the consciousness of the masses, increasing their self-confidence, when they see themselves as the author of those deeds.

On the other hand, if they are carried out when the masses have not yet arrived at an understanding of their necessity, they play a negative role, for many reasons, and they are used by the enemy as the ostensible justification for repressive violence. They then endanger courageous revolutionaries. In our case, the very existence of the organization hung in the balance.

Instead of increasing the masses' self-confidence, they cause it to diminish; some are convinced by the reactionary propaganda, and others at least see us as provocateurs, even though they consider our motives justified; finally, and this is very important, even those sectors that have a favorable attitude toward such acts fall back, for they come under the illusion that a group of redeemers will complete the struggle and that consequently the masses do not have to exert themselves to improve their organization or their struggle. . . .

Therefore, Marxists persist in showing the masses that their power lies in themselves, in a methodology that sifts the experiences of the world's people, in organizations suitable for action by the masses. If there are different levels of organization whose vanguard is the party, it is precisely because the party brings together the least alienated and most combative sector of those masses, the sector that believes least in redeemers and that believes most in the power of the masses; the party is not a collection of exceptional individuals who can substitute themselves for the action of the masses.

When in the course of struggle, the triumphs of our methodology are seen as the individual merit of some comrade, and this view is encouraged by the enemy, our duty is to continue struggling for the disillusionment of the masses, for their disenchantment, to show them that the merit is in the program of struggle and the methods that that comrade has employed and that are based precisely on a profound confidence in the masses. In this way, the most advanced and decisive elements of the masses will understand that they are capable of mastering those methods in their manifold and complete development, but that in order to do so, it is essential to unite and combine their individual forces in a disciplined organization, in the revolutionary party which is characterized by just such methods.¹⁷

The lessons of the Peruvian experience provide considerable illumination on the differences that have appeared in the Fourth International, as I hope I have succeeded in showing. Two lines with regard to the utilization of guerrilla actions emerged during the course of participation in the immense peasant upsurge in Peru.

One line, represented by Hugo Blanco, stood in the Leninist tradition. It considered guerrilla action to be a tactical question. Some mistakes were made; these involved not holding firmly enough to making party building the top priority. However, the prime need of becoming rooted in the masses and of viewing resort to arms as flowing out of the mass organizations themselves was never lost sight of.

The other line, represented by Daniel Pereyra, tended to elevate guerrilla war into a strategy. The source of the deviation clearly

emanated from the view that the pattern of the Cuban revolution could be duplicated. The needs of party building were depreciated. Guerrilla actions were undertaken in isolation from the masses and as a substitute for mass action. The consequences were disastrous to the Peruvian section.

The two lines again came into conflict at the Ninth World Congress. Hugo Blanco, still held in El Frontón prison, could not be present at that congress. Daniel Pereyra was present, however; and his line carried the day against the minority of delegates who argued for the line followed by Hugo Blanco.

The consequence was that the Fourth International had to try out the Túpac Amaru experiment two more times. Comrade Germain argues that the mass struggles in Argentina and Bolivia "were much wider and more generalised than those of the 1962 peasant movement in which Comrade Blanco was involved," and that therefore it was even more correct in those countries than it was in Peru to turn to armed struggle.¹⁸ However, the results for the POR in Bolivia and PRT (*Combatiente*) in Argentina were not substantially different from those that came from the guerrillism of the Túpac Amaru. Not having learned from the mistakes made in Peru, the two sections were doomed to repeat them.

Before we leave this topic, it is only fair to give credit to Comrade Germain for his sympathetic interest in Hugo Blanco's views. Let us hope that he will use his influence to help break the boycott that such publications as *La Gauche* and *Rouge* have placed on current articles written in exile by the Peruvian Trotskyist leader.

What Comrade Germain Forgot in the Chinese Example

At bottom, Comrade Germain, must not have felt completely confident about his "forgotten Peruvian example." He decided to bring up another example, this one drawn from the Chinese revolution of 1925-27. Comrade Germain has accused us of having unduly broadened the issues in dispute. In this instance, however, it is he who most plead guilty. For our part, we do not mind. Perhaps the time has come to review the lessons of 1925-27 in China in the light of subsequent experience. However, since that really belongs to a separate discussion, I shall confine my remarks for the present merely to the points Comrade Germain brings up.

According to him, Trotsky *regretted* that "a few thousand communists, no more, didn't start to organize a communist-led

peasant army behind the rear of Chiang's troops."¹⁹

Moreover, according to Comrade Germain, Trotsky "even went so far as to clearly state that the building of a really *revolutionary* party was conditioned upon its capacity to lead, organise, arm and steel the peasants uprising into a real army of the toilers."²⁰

Comrade Germain emphasizes that "Trotsky was speaking of a party of only 10-15,000 members in a country of then some 450 million inhabitants," and the majority of these party members lived in the cities.

At first sight, Comrade Germain seems to have made a pretty strong case for taking a party of miniscule dimensions and orienting the members toward rural guerrilla war, either as a prerequisite to building a *revolutionary* party or as an essential concomitant. In short, to believe Comrade Germain, Trotsky's writings on the Chinese revolution of 1925-27 show that he advocated rural guerrilla war in that situation, regretted that it was not initiated, and thus it was correct for the Trotskyists of today to launch rural guerrilla war in Latin America, and naturally for the last world congress to have adopted this orientation. Very tight reasoning.

We can add, for good measure, that the case Comrade Germain has made out will hearten those who believe that when all is said and done Mao's course was the correct one in contrast to the line followed by the Chinese Trotskyists. They had not found much in Trotsky's writings to bolster their view before Comrade Germain uncovered this "forgotten example."

Comrade Germain draws his conclusions from a couple of paragraphs in *The Third International After Lenin*. Since he places much store on this quotation, let us repeat it so that everyone can study it with due care and draw the proper lessons from it. To assist in this, the inclusion of a few sentences preceding those cited by Comrade Germain may prove useful:

It would be unwise pedantry to maintain that, had a Bolshevik policy been applied in the revolution of 1925-1927, the Chinese Communist Party would *unfailing*ly have come to power. But it is contemptible philistinism to assert that such a possibility was entirely out of the question. The mass movement of workers and peasants was on a scale entirely adequate for this,⁵⁹ [This footnote number is from *The Third International After Lenin*; see Hansen's comment below—Ed.] as was also the disintegration of the ruling classes. The national bourgeoisie sent its Chiang Kai-sheks and Wang Ching-wei as envoys to Moscow, and through its Hu Han-mins knocked at the door of the Comintern, precisely because it was

hopelessly weak in face of the revolutionary masses;²¹ it realized its weakness and sought to insure itself. Neither the workers nor the peasants would have followed the national bourgeoisie if we ourselves had not dragged them by a rope. [Comrade Germain left out these sentences indicating the context; he begins his quotation at this point.—J.H.] Had the Comintern pursued any sort of correct policy, the outcome of the struggle of the communist party for the masses would have been pre-determined—the Chinese proletariat would have supported the communists, while the peasant war would have supported the revolutionary proletariat.

If, at the beginning of the Northern expedition we had begun to organize Soviets in the “liberated” districts (and the masses were instinctively aspiring for that with all their might and main) we would have secured the necessary basis and a revolutionary running start, we would have rallied around us the agrarian uprisings, we would have built *our own* army, we would have disintegrated the enemy armies; and despite the youthfulness of the Communist Party of China, the latter would have been able, thanks to proper guidance from the Comintern, to mature in these exceptional years and to assume power, if not in the whole of China at once, then at least in a considerable part of China. And, above all, we would have had a *party*. [The emphasis, which Comrade Germain failed to indicate, appears in the original.]²²

The first paragraph of the quotation, it was no doubt noticed, carried a footnote numbered “59,” which was supplied either by the editor of the English edition, Max Shachtman, or, more likely, by the translator, John G. Wright. For the sake of completeness, let us quote that too:

Organized workers in China rose from 230,000 in 1923 to 570,000 in 1925, 1,264,000 in 1926 and 2,800,000 in 1927. (*Pan-Pacific Worker*, No. 2, Hankow, July 15, 1927.) More than 800,000 workers participated directly in the wave of strikes which followed the massacre of students by British police in Shanghai on May 30, 1925. General strikes completely paralyzed Shanghai and Hongkong, the latter strike lasting sixteen months. The peasant movement, which took on modern forms of organization only in 1922, directly embraced 9,720,000 peasants by March 1927, in Kwangtung, Hunan, Kiangsi and Hupeh provinces alone where independent seizure of the land was begun by the peasants in 1926 and carried out on a large scale, especially in Hunan, in the Spring of 1927.²³

What does this “forgotten example” prove? That Trotsky was a partisan of the guerrilla strategy adopted at the last congress of the Fourth International? Was Trotsky voicing *regret*, as Comrade Germain would have us believe, that “a few thousand

communists, no more, didn't start to organise a communist-led peasant army behind the rear of Chiang's troops"?

The quotations themselves speak otherwise.

1. Even in these few lines, Trotsky emphasized the scope and potential power of the *mass* movement.

2. He stressed the *disintegration* of the ruling class, reminding his readers in passing of the irrefutable evidence of this.

3. In this concrete situation, he pointed out, the Communist Party policy should have been to begin organizing *soviets*.

4. Such a policy would have made it possible in the rural areas, in the context of agrarian uprisings and large-scale, spontaneous seizures of the land, to secure a base in the masses.

5. With a mass base and the running start of soviets, it would have been possible for the Communist Party to build *its own* army and to disintegrate the enemy armies and assume power, if not in all of China, then in a considerable part.

6. "And, above all, we would have had a *party*." Trotsky himself stressed that.

The quotation thus speaks against Comrade Germain. Stalin's greatest crime in the Chinese revolution of 1925-27, as Trotsky taught us, was to saddle the Chinese Communist Party with suicidal policies, not least of which was ultraleft adventurism that included untimely "armed struggle." The outcome was a defeat of major magnitude with consequences to the party that were never overcome. What Trotsky really regretted, it is clear from the quotation, was the undermining of the *party* in a situation that favored its winning power.

Cuba—A "Forgotten Example"?

Comrade Germain lists the Cuban revolution as a "third forgotten example" of "the key role played by the armed struggle, under specific circumstances."²⁴ To illustrate his point, he singles out a paragraph from the excellent article by Comrade Peter Camejo in the November 1972 issue of the *International Socialist Review*, entitled "Why Guevara's Guerrilla Strategy Has No Future."²⁵

The aim of that article was to determine "if it is possible to repeat the strategic path of the Cuban revolution elsewhere in Latin America." Comrade Camejo's conclusion, after considering the relevant material, was that the "general outline" of the Cuban revolution can be repeated; it is possible once again for a mass mobilization to begin in one of the Latin American coun-

tries with democratic demands and continue until it passes over into a socialist revolution.

But what cannot be repeated is the conquest of governmental power without the mobilization of far more powerful social forces than were required in Cuba. . . . Thus, the strategic approach of the July 26 Movement is insufficient to achieve the necessary mass mobilization and participation prior to achieving governmental power. This will require political and organizational strategies better than those employed in the Cuban revolution.

Does Comrade Germain agree with this or not? It is hard to say. Instead of taking up the material assembled by Comrade Camejo, he limits himself to quoting Comrade Camejo's effort to summarize the main lessons of the Cuban revolution in a single paragraph. Finding this one-paragraph summary to be inadequate, Comrade Germain presents a much longer summary.

One can agree that Comrade Camejo should not have attempted to be so succinct. It would have been more satisfying if he had written something more rounded. It was not his purpose, however, to offer a study on the Cuban revolution. He was concerned about a broader arena in which the historic pattern of the Cuban revolution, for all its importance, is only a part.

If we were to agree that Comrade Germain presented a better summary, would it follow that Comrade Camejo's conclusion was wrong? Would it follow that Guevara's guerrilla strategy does have a future?

Let us follow Comrade Germain's reasoning more concretely. Leaving aside his incidental arguments, his main point about the history of the Cuban revolution is that the prime role was played by Castro's "*actual armed struggle against the dictatorship*."²⁶ "Fidel and Che's main contribution to the unfolding gigantic mass mobilisations which determined the course of the Cuban revolution . . . [was] the destruction through armed struggle of the huge repressive apparatus, which enabled the tempestuous rise of the mass movement."²⁷ The pattern of the Cuban revolution was "*a typical inter-action between the unfolding of armed struggle and of mass mobilisations, each feeding and strengthening the other*."²⁸

Does this constitute sufficient evidence that the pattern can be repeated, as Guevara thought it could be in Bolivia? It is necessary to say no; other factors must be weighed. This is precisely what Comrade Camejo sought to do. Analyzing the

pattern of the Cuban revolution, the pattern of U.S. imperialist policy since the Cuban victory, the experience of twelve years of defeated guerrilla efforts to repeat the Cuban pattern, and the appearance of new patterns of revolutionary struggle in Latin America, Comrade Camejo found no escape from the conclusion that Guevara's guerrilla strategy has no future. It will be replaced by a better strategy, the strategy of building a Leninist-type party that will view guerrilla action as a tactical question.

What is Comrade Germain's view on the considerations advanced by Comrade Camejo? Sad to say, he equivocates. "Is this a 'model' which can be repeated?" asks Comrade Germain. "In some parts it can, in others it probably won't."

U.S. imperialism hesitated to intervene in Cuba; it is not likely to hesitate elsewhere in Latin America, he believes. "That is precisely why it is correct to raise the perspective of 'prolonged civil war,' with a possible retreat from the cities where the revolution has already triumphed. . . ."

Soviets did not appear in the Cuban revolution. They will probably appear, Comrade Germain believes, "wherever Trotskyists play an important role in the phase during which the repressive apparatus of the dictatorship is overthrown."

Let's be specific. Let's try to answer the question and not evade it. Does Guevara's guerrilla strategy have a future? Comrade Germain finds it very difficult to speak clearly. He seems to say that the specific pattern "is likely to occur again"—which would make him a Guevaraist. But he hedges his tentative "likely" with so many qualifications that it is hard to determine whether he actually said it. Judge for yourself, if you can follow the ins and outs of this 106-word sentence:

But the specific interrelationship between the mass movement and armed struggle which characterised the Cuban revolution (not necessarily in the form of rural guerilla warfare, or rural guerilla warfare only; different combinations will be possible under different social and geographic conditions in different countries) is likely to occur again wherever the basic starting points of the Cuban revolution are repeated, in other words wherever a repressive dictatorship suddenly stopping the rise of the mass movement in its tracks, will be challenged by a determined revolutionary vanguard, progressively gaining mass support and helping to relaunch mass mobilisations till the point of a successful overthrow of the dictatorship.²⁹

If I am not misinterpreting the essence of this convoluted passage, Comrade Germain has what might be called a sneaking

hope that the Cuban guerrilla pattern can be repeated. His position might be termed "shamefaced Guevarism."

I hope that he will not interpret this as an epithet. The characterization is not important enough to risk that. What is important is that we have touched the key issue debated at the last world congress. If the pattern of the Cuban revolution is likely to be repeated in Latin America, then we are duty-bound to adopt that orientation and take it as the axis of activity for the cadres of the Latin American Trotskyist movement. On the other hand, if that pattern is not likely to be repeated, then it would not only be incorrect to adopt it, it would be suicidal and even criminal. An acid test of political judgment is involved.

A *strategic* line should be based upon the dominant conditions governing the arena of struggle. *Tactical exceptions* fall within this general framework. But this is precisely what Comrade Germain cannot accept or acknowledge because it goes contrary to the Ninth World Congress line and coincides with the position taken by the minority.

It was differing judgments concerning the possibility of a repetition of the Cuban pattern that divided the delegates at the last world congress into a minority and a majority. On the basis of these judgments different prognoses were made. The debate now centers on which judgment turned out to be correct as shown by the lessons of events since then.

In arguing about the "forgotten example" of Cuba, Comrade Germain is merely repeating the basic argument heard at the last world congress to justify adopting the guerrilla orientation. He repeats, but does not clarify. In the tangle of phrases there is not an iota of fresh thought. He leaves us still wondering where he really stands.

The Events in Argentina and Bolivia

Comrade Germain takes considerable space attempting to refute the summary of events provided in "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet." The method he uses does not contribute to clarifying the issues. It consists in the main of saying "no" where the authors of that summary say "yes," and of saying "yes" where they say "no."

An example of this is the nature of the Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Front formed in Bolivia following the defeat. The authors of "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet" said of this front:

The main role of the FRA is to cover up the betrayal of the Bolivian revolution committed by the reformist parties under Torres. In the name of "unity" this fraudulent front seeks to silence any criticism by branding it as "sectarianism" so as to be in position to mislead the masses once again under the same disastrous program that was supported by the Communist Party of Bolivia and the POR (Lora).³⁰

The authors of "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet" called on our Bolivian comrades to break from this "unprincipled front."

In contrast to this, Comrade Germain maintains that the FRA rests on a program that "is substantially that of the theory of Permanent Revolution." Its program is not "bourgeois"; it is "explicitly socialist in character." By comparing a quotation from Lora's paper with a quotation from the May 1971 issue of *Combate* you can "see how brilliantly the political position of the POR/*Combate* becomes vindicated as a result of the turn by other working class parties in joining the FRA."³¹

Consequently he concludes that it was not wrong "in principle" for the POR to enter this front.

A closer study of the FRA, of the authorship of its "explicitly socialist" program, and of its activities will settle this factual question and others like it.

This has already occurred in one instance. In "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet," it was asserted that the PRT (*Combatiente*) had proved incapable of linking up with the masses:

A crucial question becomes more and more acute for such Guevaraist groups—how to "link up" with the masses. This becomes their central preoccupation. And because they cannot find a solution to this problem they become ripe for disintegration or for a turn toward opportunism. What they fail to see is that their very concept of armed struggle blocks them from forming organic ties with the masses.³²

Comrade Germain affirms the opposite. He lists a series of items to show how the PRT (*Combatiente*) succeeded in linking up with the masses in at least Córdoba. A member of the PRT was able to speak as an open representative of the guerrilla organization and "was given a standing ovation." ERP detachments penetrated into "some 30 factories where special conditions of repression existed" and "held long discussions" with the workers "on the present and next stage of the class struggle in Argentina."

Comrade Germain even goes so far as to picture the ERP at the head of the masses in action: "During the second Cordobazo, the armed detachments of the ERP actually fused with the masses and led many mass actions. The banner of the ERP flew on most of the barricades put up by the fighting masses. Thousands of people followed the coffin of a youth killed during the actions and covered this coffin with the ERP banner."

Fred Halstead of the Socialist Workers Party, who visited Argentina as a reporter for the *Militant* during the election, was able to check up on a number of the facts disputed by Comrade Germain. The evidence reported by Comrade Halstead confirms the accuracy of the account in "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet." Every comrade who feels perplexed over how to determine what the facts really were should read Comrade Halstead's contribution, "On Comrade Germain's Half-Truths: or How the ERP Flag Got on the Coffin."³³

Comrade Germain's challenge as to the facts will undoubtedly elicit other contributions like Comrade Halstead's. Peter Camejo has taken up a number of points in an article "Bolivia—Once Again on the Facts."³⁴ Whoever still feels doubtful about this level of the discussion should suspend judgment until more material is available. This is perfectly normal in a discussion of this type.

Pending the publication of further material like that submitted by Comrade Halstead and Comrade Camejo, I will not take up the disputed factual points in detail, but turn in the meantime to other arguments made by Comrade Germain, consideration of which may help to advance the discussion.

Can the Turn Be Swept Under the Rug?

In his defense of the turn at the Ninth World Congress, Comrade Germain follows three tactics:

1. As noted above, he contends that the differences began "initially around the issue of the place of armed struggle in revolutionary politics in Latin America." With such formulations, Comrade Germain seeks to equate guerrilla war and armed struggle in general, thereby making it possible to shift the discussion away from the guerrilla orientation adopted at the Ninth World Congress.

The effort to sweep the turn and the accompanying dispute under the rug is so obvious that few comrades, one can safely predict, will pay attention to it.

2. He tries to cover up the guerrilla orientation adopted at the last world congress by making out that it was a misunderstanding induced by some poorly chosen phrases:

There is no reason to deny that the 9th World Congress resolution on Latin America contains several elliptical and synthetic formulas on rural guerrilla warfare and continental civil war open to various interpretations, which try to encompass too many different variants and successive stages of struggle into a single sentence or a couple of sentences.³⁵

The trouble with that tactic is that Comrade Germain does not seem to be able to get agreement from other leading members of his tendency, particularly Comrade Maitan, to push this interpretation. Although they voted for his document, they are understandably reluctant about saying the fault was merely "several elliptical and synthetic formulas." After all, the main immediate task undertaken by the Fourth International after the congress was to help open up a guerrilla front in Bolivia.

Besides that there is the difficulty of the many public statements praising the guerrilla activities of the PRT (*Combatiente*) and the POR's preparations for guerrilla war in Bolivia as being expressions of the orientation adopted at the Ninth World Congress.

Finally there is the fact that both the PRT (*Combatiente*) and the POR (González) saw their guerrilla courses as being applications of the orientation adopted at the Ninth World Congress. Against their testimony you can hardly claim that they made a completely wrong interpretation of the turn because of "several elliptical and synthetic formulas."

3. Besides these two variations, Comrade Germain argues that the orientation adopted for Latin America was but one expression of a more fundamental turn of which we now have various other expressions, especially the European perspectives document.³⁶

"What was projected," he claims, "*was a turn towards the transformation of Trotskyist organisations from propaganda groups into organisations already capable of those political initiatives of a mass vanguard level which are required by the dynamics of the class struggle itself.*"³⁷

He offers "four instances where the effects of that 'turn' have been striking."

The first instance is the "role played by the French Trotskyists in the May '68 events. . . ." The second is the "role played by the American Trotskyists in stimulating and helping to organise a

mass antiwar movement in the USA." The third is the activities of the Spanish Trotskyists in 1971. The fourth is the initiative taken by our Ceylonese comrades in calling for a one-day general hunger strike last year.

In addition, Comrade Germain mentions the role of the Bolivian Trotskyists on August 20-21, 1971.³⁸ For some reason he does not refer at all to the rather spectacular actions carried out by the PRT (*Combatiente*) in Argentina. They didn't understand the real nature of the "turn" after all?

From this catalog, it would seem that the American Trotskyists anticipated the turn at the Ninth World Congress four years in advance, since they took the "initiative" in 1965 to help organize a mass antiwar movement. Thus, so far as the SWP is concerned, the "turn" at the Ninth World Congress was superfluous. The SWP was already on the beam. (I leave aside whether the SWP made a "turn" in 1965 or merely applied policies it had held from its foundation.)

Although Comrade Germain fails to say so, this would likewise apply to the Canadian section of the Fourth International, since it, too, took the "initiative" in 1965 to organize mass protests against the complicity of the Canadian government in the imperialist aggression in Vietnam.

The British comrades, also, had already made the "turn," since they took the "initiative" in organizing demonstrations involving up to 100,000 persons in 1968, a year before the Ninth World Congress.

The role played by the French Trotskyists also predates the Ninth World Congress by a year. The "turn" was obviously not needed to get them going on taking initiatives.

Was the turn made at the Ninth World Congress required to put the Spanish and Ceylonese comrades on the right track? This seems dubious. The Ceylonese comrades are old hands at taking "initiatives" aimed at mobilizing mass actions. The difficulties they face do not stem from any reluctance or lack of know-how in this respect. As for the Spanish comrades, they are now divided over the "turn" taken at the Ninth World Congress. Perhaps the "elliptical and synthetic formulas" led to confusion.

The predilection of the POR (González) for guerrilla warfare was, of course, known long in advance of the Ninth World Congress. As the Bolivian comrades understood it, the majority of delegates at the congress had finally adopted their stand.

Comrade Germain's arguments thus simply fall flat. To picture the turn at the Ninth World Congress as really only an extension

of the line followed by the SWP since 1965 will hardly convince the great majority of cadres of the SWP, who are quite capable of distinguishing between a political line directed at taking advantage of every possible opening in the class struggle and a line that constitutes an adaptation to Castroism such as was voted for at the Ninth World Congress.

To consider the initiatives taken by the American, the French, the Canadian, and the British Trotskyists as *consequences* of the turn made at the Ninth World Congress is absurd. They occurred before the congress, as did the first big resulting gains. (I leave aside the subsequent shift made by the British comrades away from mass demonstrations, since this without doubt was a consequence of the famous turn at the Ninth World Congress.)

The description of the turn as being in reality an effort to lift various Trotskyist groups (which ones?) from the level of propaganda to actions at "a mass vanguard level" is rather mysterious unless it refers to the burial of "entryism *sui generis*." That wasn't what the debate was about at the Ninth World Congress.

So we are left with what? A simple fact—these arguments leave out the actual turn: the orientation toward guerrilla warfare. This is another way of disposing of a subject that has become embarrassing.

II. Comrade Germain's Counterattack

Instead of Rectifying an Error

At the last world congress, the majority of delegates were elated over the adoption of the guerrilla orientation for Latin America. They set out to campaign for funds for the promised guerrilla front and a possible "breakthrough" in Bolivia. Today most of them would probably agree that the orientation is becoming increasingly difficult to defend. Perhaps some of them would like to be rid of the question. No one thinks of opening a financial campaign like the one in 1969.

The most sensible course would have been to acknowledge that it was a mistake and adopt a different orientation. That was what many of us expected would happen as the lessons of the events in Bolivia and Argentina sank home.

If this had happened, the discussion could have been very fruitful. There could have been a common examination of how the successes of the preceding period, such as the gains in membership made from the radicalizing youth, had increased the danger of bending to ultraleft pressures. A balance sheet on the Cuban revolution and the guerrilla experiences of the past decade might well have had a top place on the agenda for the next world congress. Rectification of the error would have pulled our movement powerfully together, making it possible to reach virtually unanimous agreement on a series of documents and the adoption of a common axis of work for the coming period. The leadership would have emerged heightened in stature and with a new authority that would have extended well beyond the ranks of the Fourth International.

Instead, the comrades exercising the majority in the United Secretariat and the International Executive Committee decided to defend the guerrilla orientation come what may. The inevitable consequence was the formation of tendencies and sharp divisions in the discussion—there was no other way to resolve the crisis in leadership that had been precipitated.

The situation in the Fourth International is thus a very serious

one. To surmount it successfully, the greatest objectivity is demanded of the leaders of the two sides.

In this respect, Comrade Germain's document "In Defense of Leninism: In Defense of the Fourth International" is rather disappointing. He seems more intent on bolstering a weak case in any way possible than on finding a policy that could help open a way to resolving the crisis. His studied effort to mount a counter-attack is telling evidence of this. Distasteful as the task is, there is no choice but to follow his arguments and to answer him.

The Conversion of Comrade Moreno into a Scapegoat

In November 1970, without the knowledge of the United Secretariat as a whole, Comrade Livio Maitan wrote a political letter to the PRT (*Combatiente*) that was secretly circulated in Uruguay and Argentina.³⁹ A copy eventually reached the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, and this body lodged a sharp protest with the United Secretariat over such correspondence being kept from the knowledge of the United Secretariat. The letter included an attack against Comrade Nahuel Moreno that dredged up questions going back nineteen years. The Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party likewise protested this violation of the norms of responsible leadership:

6. The chief target of Comrade Maitan's letter is Comrade Nahuel Moreno of the *La Verdad* group. In attacking him, Comrade Maitan goes back to 1951; that is, eleven years before the Reunification Congress; and he also raises doubts concerning the relation of the Argentinian comrades with the International Committee before the reunification and at the time of the reunification. This is a very serious matter, in our opinion, for Comrade Maitan has thereby injected differences into the international pre-congress discussion that were considered superseded at the time of the reunification. By doing this, he indicates that he holds doubts about the reunification itself.

7. The main objective of the letter is transparent. It seeks to advance political grounds for maintaining the recognition of the *El Combatiente* group as the Argentinian section in place of the numerical grounds used at the last world congress. The author thereby fans factional fires to the injury of the discussion preparatory to the next world congress, not the least injury being the one done to his own contributions to that discussion by the revelation that they are accompanied by narrow factional objectives of his own.

8. The attitude displayed by the author of the letter toward the *La Verdad* grouping and Comrade Moreno is not of recent origin as is shown

by the content of the letter itself. "The question arises," says the author, "why we have not discussed the problems of the Argentinian section in the past. . . . We note. . . . that it was difficult for us to intervene in the period immediately following the entry of the Argentinian organization into the International in the aftermath of the reunification and that we relied on a process of progressive assimilation."

A declaration of that nature indicates that Comrade Maitan (and whoever else he is referring to when he says "us" and "we") held reservations about the reunification in 1963 and that he (in agreement with those he refers to by "we") has acted since then in accordance with these reservations. It is impossible not to wonder about the role played by Comrade Maitan in the split that occurred in the Argentinian section prior to the last world congress. The circulation of this particular letter—which only came to our attention by accident—inevitably suggests that perhaps other similar actions have been undertaken in the same sub rosa way.⁴⁰

Comrade Moreno was singled out for this type of attack for various reasons, the principal one being to load him with personal responsibility for the deviations of the PRT (*Combatiente*). The factional advantage to be derived from turning Comrade Moreno into a scapegoat is the assist this gives to covering up the responsibility of the majority of the United Secretariat for elevating the PRT (*Combatiente*), deviations and all, into an "exemplary" section of the Fourth International, one that up until recently carried out to perfection the guerrilla orientation adopted at the last world congress.

This came out very clearly at the plenum of the International Executive Committee last December. As the reporter for the majority of the United Secretariat, Comrade Maitan listed various deviations of the PRT (*Combatiente*). At the appropriate point, he turned to Comrade Moreno, pointed an accusing finger at him, and said dramatically: "And you are the father of them!"

Comrade Moreno's response was instantaneous: "And you are the mother!"

Amid the laughter, Comrade Maitan had no rejoinder to this establishment of the parentage of the deviations of the PRT (*Combatiente*).

When Comrade Moreno took the floor to present a report on Argentina in behalf of the minority of the International Executive Committee, he took time to answer the personal attack that had been leveled at him. He admitted that he had made errors in the past. In fact, he said, he could provide an even more imposing list than the one presented by Comrade Maitan. However, he had

never sought to persist in an error, and had never had any hesitation at engaging in self-criticism, since that is the only way to really learn from errors and to overcome them most effectively.

Others at the plenum of the International Executive Committee protested the polemical method of going back twenty years in a comrade's record. This could only create prejudice against the arguments made by the comrade on a current issue. If this procedure were to be followed, then everyone's record should be laid on the table. In the Latin American discussion this would mean going back to the decision twenty years ago to back Posadas as against Comrade Moreno. It might be interesting to know what attracted Pablo, and presumably Comrades Maitan, Germain, and Frank, to a figure like Posadas; but what does this have to do with the issues under dispute now?

With this necessary background, let us examine Comrade Germain's pursuit of this question in his contribution "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International." He offers extensive quotations from an article by Comrade Moreno published in 1968. The quotations show that Comrade Moreno advocated a guerrilla orientation that was if anything more extreme than the one adopted at the world congress a year later (it was at least much more frank). "If the 9th World Congress document really had the perspective of generalised 'rural guerilla warfare' and of 'civil war on a continental scale' in 1969," says Comrade Germain, "the least one can say is that Comrade Moreno's 1968 document was its great predecessor."⁴¹

Comrade Germain then presents quotations from *La Verdad* published in 1971 which, together with the conclusions voiced in "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet," show that Comrade Moreno made "a 180 degree turnabout" in a three-year period.

From this Comrade Germain draws the conclusion that Comrade Moreno is disqualified as a leader of the Trotskyist movement.

The substance of Comrade Germain's complaint appears to be that Comrade Moreno saw his error, changed his mind, and voted against the guerrilla orientation sponsored by the majority of the United Secretariat at the last world congress.

Does it really disqualify a leader of the Fourth International to see an error and change his mind? Apparently in Comrade Germain's opinion it does. Perhaps this is part of the explanation for his persistence in clinging to the error he, among others, made at the last world congress.

Two Turns in Cuban Policy

In his 1968 article, Comrade Moreno refers to the OLAS conference held in Havana July 31-August 10, 1967. Comrade Germain does not elaborate on this reference, although it appears in the quotations he selected from Comrade Moreno's article. Elsewhere Comrade Germain mentions the OLAS conference, but without discussing its meaning. Here is what he says:

The need to take an unequivocal stand in favour of the "method" of armed struggle, never mind whether it is a "strategy" or "tactic," or "orientation," in the present period and under specific circumstances in Latin America, arises out of the very needs of the class struggle and the experiences of the toiling masses themselves. . . .

There was a time when Comrade Hansen understood this perfectly. In his article: *The OLAS Conference—Tactics and Strategy of a Continental Revolution* (ISR, November-December 1967), he wrote:

"The question of armed struggle was thus taken at the OLAS conference as a decisive dividing line, separating the revolutionists from the reformists on a continental scale. In this respect it echoed the Bolshevik tradition."⁴²

The OLAS conference was taken with the utmost seriousness by the world Trotskyist movement. We sent three cadres at the time to Havana, two of whom participated as observers at the conference. I was one of them.

Among other things, the OLAS conference marked a considerable step forward by the Castroite leadership in the direction of an international organization standing to the left of Stalinism. A move of that kind was obviously of importance to the Fourth International. If the Cubans continued to move in this direction, the Fourth International stood to gain fresh forces that could give world Trotskyism great impetus. If they paused at a half-way point, this would create special problems for us. And if they adopted an anti-Trotskyist stand, an international organization backed by them would emerge as a dangerous rival. The outcome was not settled in advance. Our own efforts could influence it.

Among the favorable developments was a sharp division between the organizers of the OLAS conference and some of the Latin American Stalinist leaders. Fidel Castro was particularly vigorous in castigating the treachery of the Venezuelan Stalinists. The line of principle drawn by the Cubans against the

reformists was *armed struggle*. By this they meant, of course, mainly guerrilla war.

Even though we disagreed with their view of guerrilla war as a strategy for taking power (this was before the Ninth World Congress!), there was no question as to which side we should support. As I have explained above, in a battle between advocates of the "peaceful road" and advocates of the road of "armed struggle," we stand with the latter, however one-sided they are or whatever criticisms we might have to offer.

Something else was associated with the OLAS conference. This was the widely spread rumor in the Latin American Left that the Cubans had decided to step up their support of guerrilla struggles in the continent in a major way. We were able to verify that there was substance to the rumor. All the revolutionary currents that had delegates or observers at the conference were discussing the possibilities this turn might open up.

The Trotskyist movement had no reasonable political choice but to take cognizance of the prospect. Guerrilla actions carried on by small, isolated contingents were one thing. A regroupment of the Left in conjunction with guerrilla actions backed by a workers' state was something else again. Under the concrete circumstances, it could mean a well-supplied, major effort to extend the Cuban revolution, with all revolutionary currents invited to participate. At one point or another, this would inevitably bring up the question of political leadership and political organization; and along with that the question of program and the role of a Leninist-type party. Clearly, the Trotskyist movement had to consider how, under such circumstances, it could best advance Leninism.

No great problem was involved. For us guerrilla war was a *tactical* question. In relation to any guerrilla movement, we merely had to remain steadfast in our strategic objective of constructing a party capable of guiding a revolution to success.

In the report I wrote of the OLAS conference, as I have previously indicated, the above considerations were borne in mind. That is why I ended the article with some critical observations. These included the failure of the Cubans to examine the reasons for the betrayal committed by the Venezuelan Stalinists, and the failure of the Cubans to anticipate the betrayal. "Study of the question will of itself eliminate the deficiency—which is lack of knowledge of the true history of the world Communist movement and lack of appreciation of what Stalinism did to that movement."⁴³

I called attention to a related question: "How did it happen that in the internal struggle in the Venezuelan Communist Party, the faction that stood for revolutionary principles ended up in a minority while the faction that stood for class collaboration ended in a majority?"⁴⁴ Cuba's nearness to Venezuela, the impact of the Cuban revolution throughout the continent, and the fact that the revolutionary faction had behind it the weight of a workers' state made the question all the more pertinent.

Besides that I called attention to the problem of "the revolutionary struggle in the cities." (This was written in 1967, *before* the Ninth World Congress where the majority opted for *rural* guerilla war.)

The key issue is what to do in situations where the masses are not yet prepared to engage in all-out combat but can be mobilized to at least some degree. Is leadership of the workers and the unemployed to be turned over to the right-wing betrayers? Without a battle for the allegiance of the masses? Are there partial struggles which the workers and unemployed might be prepared to engage in that could prove propitious to the revolutionary cause and which might serve at least to remove the right-wing betrayers from the field as a serious obstacle?⁴⁵

As can be seen, these questions implied consideration of transitional slogans, transitional forms of struggle, and transitional stages of mobilizing the masses—all of which Comrade Germain once understood "perfectly."

In battling the Stalinists, I said,

The correct countermove would seem to be to step into the arena of the class struggle in the cities and seek to outflank the right-wing CP leaders to the left. The secret of success lies in the development of transitional slogans which in and of themselves are more realistic than the measures advocated by the reformists yet entail a logic that takes the masses along the road of revolution.⁴⁶

I also took up the relevance of revolutionary theory and the need to bring it to bear in the Latin American scene. In criticism of the Cubans, I said: "The tendency noticeable at the OLAS conference to discount theory was one of the consequences of leaving out of account the role of Stalinism as a determinant in the betrayal of the Venezuelan Communist Party."⁴⁷

Finally, in accordance with the position of the Fourth International before the Ninth World Congress, I stressed the need for party building:

All this is associated with the question of developing a homogeneous leadership and organizational structure in all its aspects. This is what revolutionary Marxists mean when they talk about the necessity of building a party of action. At the OLAS conference this question was colored by the Cuban experience so that one heard such contradictory statements as "the revolution will be made with or without a party" and "the guerrillas constitute the core of the party." If the revolution can be made without a party why advance the concept of a party being built around guerrillas or of guerrillas performing any political function at all? And while the possibility of making a revolution without a party was voiced, at the same time the necessity for absolute discipline in the struggle, the disciplined combination of the military and political aspects was insisted upon. The question obviously demands deep consideration, the elimination of misunderstandings arising from various sources, not least of all the bad impression created by the Stalinist and Social Democratic record in Latin America and elsewhere. A study of the Bolshevik experience could possibly prove of unusual interest if it were undertaken with due consideration for the peculiarities to be found in Latin America.⁴⁸

I have quoted at some length in order to establish among other things that it takes more space to present the truth than it does to suggest a lie through a half-truth. Comrade Germain sought to imply with his extract from the above article that at the Ninth World Congress I had changed from the position voiced by my 1967 article. But what I said in the article proves the opposite—it proves the complete consistency of the position I took in backing the minority at the Ninth World Congress.

This explanation will, I hope, make it easier to place Comrade Moreno's 1968 article in context. He took the reports of the turn of the Cubans at the OLAS conference as proof that a great new perspective was opening up, and he at once tried to move into position to be able to exert maximum influence on further developments. His approach should have been weighed more carefully, and, as he himself has said since then, he considers that it was a mistake. To understand better what made him change his mind, the sequel to the OLAS conference must be remembered.

It was completely true that the Cubans had decided to give a vigorous push to guerrilla war on the continent. Even while the OLAS conference was being held, Che Guevara was preparing to open a guerrilla front in Bolivia.

But some very bad errors were made. Besides deciding to open a guerrilla front in Bolivia in isolation from the Bolivian masses

and in isolation from all of the Bolivian Left except the Stalinists and a pro-Cuban guerrilla current, the Cubans acted in isolation from the masses and all the revolutionary currents in all the rest of the Latin American countries. Without pausing here to go into more specific errors, these two gross mistakes doomed the perspective of any early advance of the Cuban revolution on the continent.

One of the main consequences of the defeat was that the Cubans drew back from further experiments. Whether they would seriously examine the reasons for the defeat and ultimately come up with a viable political course (which would have pointed in the direction of encouraging the construction of Leninist-type combat parties on the continent) could not be predicted with certainty. This had to be awaited. Eventually they shifted further away from involvement on any significant scale in guerrilla struggles in Latin America and gave ground to Stalinism in disturbing ways (support of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, support of Popular Frontism in Chile, etc.).

The indicated task facing the Fourth International at the Ninth World Congress was to draw a balance sheet on OLAS, Guevara's defeat, and the entire series of defeats of isolated guerrilla actions in the preceding period. Instead of doing this, the majority at the Ninth World Congress itself adopted a guerrilla orientation! To use a term which Comrade Germain is trying to revive and popularize in our movement, the majority was guilty of "tail-endism." The majority was guilty of tail-ending Castroism. And this after the Castroites themselves came to realize that their orientation was not working out and moved away from it, albeit in a wrong direction.

What James P. Cannon and Peter Camejo Said

A word should be said about Comrade Germain's attempt to use a quotation from Comrade Cannon's book *Letters from Prison* against me. It concerns the question of ultraleftism in the Fourth International.

Comrade Germain asks: "But what about the central thesis of 'ultraleftism' as a universal, or in any case the 'main danger' facing the world Trotskyist movement?"⁴⁹ He remarks further on: "The record, therefore, does not bear out the assessment of Comrade Hansen of ultraleftism being the universal danger menacing the Fourth International against which a merciless crusade must be organised."⁵⁰ Comrade Germain holds that

the "main danger" is opportunism; and he cites the record to try to prove it. The "record" he offers includes the betrayal committed by the former Trotskyists in Ceylon, who took posts in the Bandaranaike government,⁵¹ and opportunist turns made by Healy, Posadas, Lambert,⁵² and Lora.

These are strange examples. None of these figures belong to the Fourth International today. Nor do they meet the proviso laid down by Comrade Germain that the opportunist danger is especially acute in periods of "rapid growth."

On top of that, the reference to my alleged "assessment" is inaccurate. I never advanced a "central thesis" that ultraleftism constitutes a "universal" or "main danger" for the Fourth International. What I did was to *explain* the reasons that led the majority of the United Secretariat to make *concessions* to ultraleftism. In addition, I pointed to the repercussions in various sectors of the Fourth International. I admit to finding this to be of grave concern and I am sorry that Comrade Germain does not agree with me.

As to the main danger right now, I think that is to be found in the crisis in orientation and leadership now facing the Fourth International which opens the way to *shifts* toward ultraleftism or opportunism or combinations of both.

To bolster his points, Comrade Germain admits that while a danger of ultraleftism does exist during a process of rapid growth, this is by no means the only danger, "especially not in pre-revolutionary and revolutionary situations." At such times the main danger is "opportunist deviations." He adds: "There is a general logic about this, which Comrade Cannon has expressed admirably in his 'Letters from Prison.'"⁵³

The quotation, naturally, bears out Comrade Germain's point about the "general logic" of such situations: ". . . we hear the astonishing contention," Comrade Cannon writes, "that the Fourth International must be on guard against the left danger. If the perspective is revolutionary, if we are witnessing the beginning of a great revolutionary upsurge, we must rather expect manifestations of the right danger in the sharpest form. That is a historical law."⁵⁴

This quotation is beside the point in the current discussion. I was not talking about the "general logic" of prerevolutionary situations but of the *concrete logic* of the concession to ultraleftism made by Comrade Germain and the other members of the majority of the United Secretariat at the world congress of the Fourth International in April 1969. Comrade Cannon's observa-

tions, made in Sandstone Prison in a letter dated January 16, 1945, had nothing to do with the concession to ultraleftism made twenty-four years later by part of the leadership of the Fourth International.

From the context of Comrade Cannon's letter it is clear that he was dealing with two questions. One was the opportunist tendency of an incipient faction in the SWP that was looking in the direction of the Shachtmanites.⁵⁵ The other was the opportunism that could be expected to come to the fore in the upsurge of the masses that was beginning in Europe as the Second World War came to a close. That opportunism was not necessarily any big danger *within* the ranks of the Fourth International, although it could *become* so under pressure from the Social Democracy or Stalinism.

Is anything more required to show how hard pressed Comrade Germain is to find material for his counterattack?

From a methodological point of view, Comrade Germain's polemic is very revealing. He dissolves the concrete into the abstract. The specific case of a concession to ultraleftism made at the last world congress is diluted by bringing forward cases of opportunism in other times and other places, it is then washed out by advancing the "general logic" favoring opportunism in certain situations. All of this is given a veneer of authoritativeness by quoting Comrade Cannon's observations concerning a general "historical law."

Comrade Germain seems to have a weakness for this method. A strikingly clear example appears on page 6 of this document where he quotes from a contribution made by Comrade Peter Camejo to the internal bulletin of the Mexican section.

In stressing the importance to our movement of carrying on consistent work in the Argentine trade unions, Comrade Camejo called attention to the fact that even under the reactionary military dictatorship there were no insuperable obstacles to this; just the contrary: ". . . it is easier to do revolutionary work within the trade unions of Argentina than in most countries in Latin America, or Europe for that matter."

Seizing on this sentence, Comrade Germain accuses Comrade Camejo of advancing "the thesis that it is 'easier' to do revolutionary work in the trade unions under a military dictatorship than under conditions of bourgeois democracy."

Take a close look at Comrade Germain's methodology. Comrade Camejo called attention to a concrete fact about the trade unions in Argentina; i.e., that it is easier to do revolutionary work

there than in the *rest* of Latin America, whether the regimes elsewhere are bourgeois democracies or *military dictatorships*. The situation in Argentina *in this respect* is so exceptional that it is easier to do revolutionary work in the unions there than in Europe (whether under bourgeois democracies or military dictatorships). Comrade Germain converts this specific fact into a broad generalization (for that is his method) and then ascribes this generalization to Comrade Camejo, having him reach the ridiculous position that *in general* it is easier to do revolutionary work in trade unions under military dictatorships than under bourgeois democracies.

Yet the fact is that it has been notoriously difficult to do revolutionary work inside the trade unions dominated by the Stalinist and Social Democratic bureaucracies in Western Europe (and in the United States in unions dominated by bourgeois-minded bureaucrats). In Argentina the difficulties are not as great. This happens to be one of the reasons why the Argentine situation is so important for our movement today and why our comrades in the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (the sympathizing section of the Fourth International) were a thousand times right in paying special attention to revolutionary work in the unions.

To illustrate how flawed Comrade Germain's reasoning is on this point, one need only utilize his method and turn the argument around. By doing that we would have to reach the conclusion that Comrade Germain is advancing the general thesis that it is easier to do revolutionary work in a Stalinist-ridden union under bourgeois democracy than it is in a union where the rank and file have established factory committees and the country, regardless of its regime, is racked by a prerevolutionary crisis.

How did a theoretician of Comrade Germain's caliber fall into such an abysmal pattern of thinking? It is because he is arguing for an erroneous orientation and this inevitably becomes reflected in his argumentation.

Unfortunately much more than a lapse in the polemics of an individual comrade is involved. The same methodology exhibited in these two instances is responsible for the orientations on a continental and international scale that have plunged the Fourth International into a deep crisis.

Dragon Hunting in the North

In one of the literary flourishes in his counterattack, Comrade Germain has me turning a "strangely blind eye" to the "tail-endist" currents that are "developing today inside the world Trotskyist movement." The cause of this strangely blind eye, according to him, is that I have been seized by an "all-consuming passion for tracking down and slaying the dangerous dragon of 'rural guerrilla warfare' and 'terrorist Guevarism.'"⁵⁶

Comrade Germain, I must admit, is right on target. I can only plead guilty and see what can be done about that strangely blind eye. But Comrade Germain should not have stopped after catching me. My bad example is spreading in the International. Comrade Germain, for instance, has now himself been seized by an all-consuming passion for tracking down and slaying dangerous dragons. The difference is that instead of trying to spot the head, as I have done, he examines the other end of the beast and insists on a distinctive anatomical feature. The animal must have a tail end.

In Canada he has found a hunting ground teeming with game of this kind. He bagged two specimens in short order. One was a leaflet issued under the name of the Young Socialists. The other was an editorial in *Labor Challenge*. The two items appeared during the 1972 general elections in Canada in which the LSA/LSO called for critical support to the New Democratic Party.⁵⁷ To believe Comrade Germain, these two items constitute damning evidence that in adopting a stand of critical support for the Canadian version of a labor party and asking the workers to vote for it, the LSA/LSO tail-ended "reformism."

The leaflet and the editorial do contain bad formulations. Comrade Germain quite properly put down two points for his side on his debater's scorecard. One hopes that the Canadian comrades will draw the proper lesson about carefully checking every single item they publish. Careless or ill-thought-out formulations can not only distort or misrepresent the position of the LSA/LSO, they can be seized on by factionalists to make out a case that otherwise would have nothing to stand on.

Comrade Germain omits mentioning that the leaflet and the editorial were exceptions; he did not point out that the general line of the LSA/LSO was correct, as shown by resolutions and by the general editorial policy of the LSA/LSO press. The cause of

his oversight, Comrade Germain will agree, is the strangely blind eye possessed by dragon hunters.

With two dragons in his bag, Comrade Germain stalks another one, an article by Comrade Beiner in an issue of *Libération*.⁵⁸ This contains formulations that, to believe Comrade Germain, would show that Beiner holds a two-stage theory of revolution, putting him in the camp of Menshevism. Comrade Beiner, of course holds no such position.

On this slim basis, Comrade Germain delivers a lengthy lecture on nationalism, the national liberation struggle, and their relation to the theory of permanent revolution. If you abstract the factional bias, you can hardly be against some of this educational material, particularly the excellent quotations from Lenin and Trotsky. Other parts are wrong or self-contradictory.

Inasmuch as the Canadian comrades are preparing a detailed answer to Comrade Germain, I will not pause on these points, but proceed to his attack on Ross Dowson and the majority of the leadership of the Canadian section. Here is the tale as told by Comrade Germain:

During the summer of 1972, we were confronted with an extraordinary spectacle. Within the space of a month, the Central Committee of the Canadian section, the LSA/LSO, first nearly unanimously adopted the general line of a political resolution expressing support for "Canadian nationalism" as against "US domination of Canada," and then rejected the very same line by an overwhelming majority.

We don't want to concentrate on the somewhat disturbing formal aspects of this development. How is it possible that without a word of explanation a majority of Trotskyist leaders can adopt two completely conflicting positions, within a few weeks of each other, one of which is totally alien to the traditions of Leninism? . . .

How could an experienced Trotskyist leader like Comrade Ross Dowson, trained for decades in the Trotskyist programme, arrive at such a gravely wrong position? Why did the large bulk of the Central Committee of the Canadian section follow him at first on that line?⁵⁹

Good debater that he is, Comrade Germain has his answers already: "Because," he says,

the method of approach to the national question in an imperialist country was wrong—and had been wrong too in the approach to the Quebecois question. Because, contrary to Lenin's advice, the Canadian comrades did not start from "a clear notion of historical and economic circumstances,"

i.e., from an *analysis of objective class relations*, but from speculations about the moods of the masses. What inspired Comrade Dowson to move to this wrong position was the fact that growing mass support seemed to manifest itself for concrete demands oriented against U.S. imperialism. At the root of his revisionism is the same deviation of tail-endism.⁶⁰

The problems facing our Canadian comrades were not as simple—or as mysterious—as Comrade Germain would have us believe. And the solutions they found through their own independent efforts were completely in accordance with the program and principles of Leninism and Trotskyism.

Our movement has been confronted in recent years by the rise of a new current among the Canadian masses and particularly the vanguard. It has been labeled “Canadian nationalism.” The term, in my opinion, is rather misleading although the movement has assumed some nationalist aspects. The phenomenon is contradictory. One of its prominent aspects was opposition to U.S. intervention in the Vietnamese civil war. It is antiwar, and antibomb—features that were especially outstanding in the mass protest actions against the nuclear bomb testing at Amchitka.⁶¹ These components, along with others, have given the movement a decidedly anti-American coloration—a phenomenon to be observed in comparable movements in many countries besides Canada.

These features alone compelled our Canadian comrades to pay increasingly close attention to this developing movement in view of its relation to their work in mobilizing mass actions in defense of the Vietnamese revolution around the theme of opposition to the complicity of the Canadian government in the U.S. intervention in Vietnam.

The division in the leadership of the LSA/LSO began to occur when the “Canadian nationalist” movement reached such proportions as to require theoretical assessment as something *new* in Canadian politics. The precise details as to how the various comrades came to appreciate this were largely accidental—as in all such turns in our movement anywhere in the world—and hardly affect the substance of the process.

At first sight, Comrade Dowson’s position appeared to be an extension of an earlier stand taken by the LSA/LSO. This gave it a great deal of weight. But other members of the leadership were uneasy about some of Comrade Dowson’s conclusions. These appeared to contradict other positions long held by the LSA/LSO. At what point had Comrade Dowson gone wrong?

They felt that they faced a small crisis in reaching a correct and rounded position and they set out to resolve it. This decision was completely to the credit of the Canadian section, testifying in actuality to the solid foundations laid down by Comrade Dowson in particular in building the section.

A discussion, preparatory to a convention, was opened up. The discussion was thorough and democratic; in fact it was a model discussion well worth study by the entire Fourth International. "In the space of 11 months, some 58 issues of the English-language Internal Discussion Bulletin were published, containing 91 contributions—for a total of 1,665 pages of typewritten material and approximately 675,000 words. Of this, about half consisted of minority views in opposition to the line resolutions submitted by the Political Committee."⁶²

The convention itself was conducted in exemplary fashion, the majority making a number of organizational concessions not called for in the rules of democratic centralism in order to assure various tendencies or special points of view the maximum opportunity to express their opinions.

The vote on the question of special interest to Germain, the position of Comrade Dowson on "Canadian nationalism," was 5 for, 48 against, 0 abstentions. The resolution presented by the majority of the Political Committee was adopted by a wide margin.

Comrade Dowson and the comrades who agreed with him fought hard for their position in the internal bulletin, in branch discussions, and on the floor of the convention. When the vote was in, they announced that they would abide by the decision of the majority. They dissolved the tendency they had formed to advance their viewpoint, although in the next internal discussion they may submit new material in defense of their position.

Taking the discussion as a whole, it marked an advance for the LSA/LSO in clarifying the problems facing Canadian Trotskyism, educating the membership, and in developing a new layer of cadres and leaders.

To anyone really acquainted with the Canadian section of the Fourth International this outcome was not unexpected. To anyone whose knowledge does not go beyond what appears in Comrade Germain's attack, the outcome may have appeared surprising. It does not fit in with Comrade Germain's description of an organization that no longer uses the Leninist method and is incapable of doing anything better than paddling a canoe in the wake of reformism.

Comrade Germain's description is misleading because he failed to describe the positions taken by the majority of the Political Committee that were presented for discussion by the membership. His one-sided presentation left the impression that the line advanced by the leadership of the Canadian section consisted of a reformist, tail-endist mess. He associated this mess with Comrade Dowson's position on Canadian nationalism. The truth was that Comrade Dowson stood in a minority in the leadership on this particular question. From Comrade Germain's biased presentation you would never guess that the leadership of the Canadian section of the Fourth International is of high level and quite capable of standing on its own feet and learning from its mistakes.

Comrade Germain's factional attitude—for that is what it is—has an explanation. He is interested, as is his right, in advancing the international tendency he represents. In the Canadian section, a minority grouping that calls itself the Revolutionary Communist Tendency has been in opposition to the "regime" for some time. It got in touch with the leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency, who asked the RCT to send documentation as to its views. In return the RCT received advance copies of "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International."

The document was circulated privately among the members of the RCT during the preconvention discussion. The intensive barrage leveled by Comrade Germain in this document against the leadership of the Canadian section was not without effect among the members of the RCT. To the inexperienced or unwary, its seemingly unanswerable criticisms and charges appeared all the more unanswerable because the author withheld release of the document until ten days before the convention. The Canadian Trotskyist leaders under attack by Comrade Germain had no opportunity to defend themselves during the preconvention discussion.

One of the consequences was that the RCT developed an extremely factional attitude. At the convention they pictured the Québec wing of the Canadian section of the Fourth International as having "degenerated," a process they held to be "irreversible." The real Trotskyists in Québec, according to them, were to be found outside the Canadian section of the Fourth International; that is, in a small group headed by Michel Mill, who had split from the LSA/LSO. According to the RCT, the process of degeneration in the rest of the organization was entering its "final stage" but was not yet complete. Here some of the rank and

file could still be "saved." In addition to this, the RCT maintained that the views of two other small groups on the fringe of the Trotskyist movement were genuinely Trotskyist. These groups, called the "Red Circle" and the "Old Mole," have been engaging in unity maneuvers in hope of attracting some members from the LSA/LSO.⁶³

Comrade Germain indicated his attitude on this question in the following passage:

"There is no justification for comrade Mill's group's split from the LSA-LSO. In our view, comrades who have serious differences with the majority line of their national sections should fight for their political views inside these sections."

They really should, shouldn't they? The language could hardly be called cutting; lest feelings had been wounded, however, Comrade Germain thoughtfully spread soothing salve on the splitters:

"But this being said, objectivity demands to state unequivocally that Comrade Mill has been proved right against the majority leadership of the Canadian section in both instances where he differed with it on the national question."⁶⁴

Let us not forget that Comrade Germain failed to include a presentation of the four majority resolutions that were placed before the membership for discussion and a vote. (Three were available before he finished his contribution; the other became available before it was published.) Let us not forget, too, that Comrade Germain's document circulated only among the members of the RCT prior to the convention, so that the badge of approval pinned on Mill did not come up for objective examination. In short, Comrade Germain got away with it.

This helps us to understand better why, immediately following the convention, a number of members of the RCT split from the Canadian section of the Fourth International. It would have been a fitting exit had they lined up for a tap on the wrist and a kiss on the cheek as they tail-ended toward the camp of the man who "objectivity demands to state has been proved right."

The "Khvostism" of the SWP⁶⁵

In handling the Socialist Workers Party, Comrade Germain is much more cautious and diplomatic than he is with the Canadian section of the Fourth International and the sympathizing section of the Fourth International in Argentina. However, this commendable tone is not shared by others in his camp. For

instance, one of his zealous ultraleft admirers in Venezuela, apparently reflecting some of the things being said in private, accuses the leadership of the SWP of "congenital reformism," of "tail-ending . . . the religious and pacifist organizations" in the antiwar movement, of "religious respect for the laws of the bourgeois state, a dogmatic and routinist mentality, conservatism, total absence of revolutionary audacity, total absence of imagination and creative talent, and finally manifest pusillanimity." In his opinion, the "reformist cancer must be extirpated in the most energetic way. . . ." ⁶⁶ (By a curious coincidence—or is it so curious?—the cancer metaphor has been used by Comrade Germain's followers in Canada against the leadership of the LSA/LSO: "Clearly, the cancer of reformism has assumed malignant proportions in the Canadian section.") ⁶⁷

No doubt Comrade Germain will plead that he should not be held responsible for the extremist language of some of his followers. To that one must agree that they are not yet polished debaters. On the other hand, the direct correspondence between language and concept in their polemics is of advantage in bringing things into the open where they can be debated and clarified.

However, Comrade Germain is not without responsibility for the line of attack against the SWP voiced by his Venezuelan follower. The line is indicated by the following passage:

But the SWP leadership has to seriously ponder whether its objections against the armed struggle orientation of the Bolivian and Argentine sections; whether its objections against the European Thesis; whether its tendency to extend exceptional characteristics of the Black and Chicano liberation struggle in the USA to a generalised concept of "Trotskyism = consistent nationalism" in all kinds of oppressed or semi-colonial nationalities around the world; whether the blind eye it turns on obvious right-wing tail-endist deviations of the Canadian section's majority, of the Moreno group and of the minority tendency of the IMG, do not fundamentally originate from a wrong one-sided concept of the function of the Transitional Programme under conditions of growing working class upsurge, of imminent or already real pre-revolutionary crisis in society. ⁶⁸

To this list should be added the SWP's insistence on calling attention to clauses in the cease-fire accord in Vietnam that were injurious to the Vietnamese revolution; opposing the Stalinist line of dropping the demand "U.S. Troops Out Now!" in favor of demanding that Nixon "Sign Now!"; and refusing to place political confidence in either the North Vietnamese government

or the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam.

Rather than take up all these points here—I have already dealt with some, while others requiring extensive treatment are being dealt with by others—I will confine myself to some observations on the items most pertinent to SWP policies in the U.S.

Let us begin with the course followed by the SWP in the antiwar movement. Here is Comrade Germain's argument:

In the same sense, we wonder whether e.g. in the mass antiwar movement, which the SWP has helped to organize in such an exemplary way, it wouldn't have been necessary to *combine* a general united front approach toward mobilizing the maximum number of people for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam, with a more specific propaganda directed to a more limited vanguard, explaining the need to support the Vietnamese revolution till its final victory (i.e. the need to support the process of permanent revolution unfolding in Vietnam). While the largest possible mass demonstrations for the withdrawal of the US troops were undoubtedly the best contributions which American revolutionists could make to the victory of the Vietnamese revolution—and in that sense we entirely approved and approve the SWP's line in the antiwar movement—withdrawal of troops does not *equal* victory of the Vietnamese revolution, as subsequent events have stressed sufficiently. To continue a more limited solidarity movement with the Vietnamese revolution, once the US troops had been withdrawn, could have been prepared by a more combined approach to agitation and propaganda, which, incidentally, would have helped recruit among vanguard elements too.⁶⁹

The SWP, of course, welcomes any suggestions on how to facilitate recruitment inside the main bastion of world imperialism. If any new recruiting techniques developed in Belgium, France, or Italy, for instance, can be applied in the U.S., the SWP will adopt them with gratitude. However, this does not seem to be Comrade Germain's main message—stepped-up recruitment would have been only an incidental gain. His main point is an implied criticism. I don't know why he does not state it frankly, since we also welcome criticism, particularly if it is valid.

What is the substance of the criticism? It appears to be that while the SWP did well in *organizing* a broad protest movement against the U.S. imperialist intervention in Vietnam, it should have concomitantly directed itself to "a more limited vanguard" on the basis of supporting the Vietnamese revolution "till its final victory." In short, the SWP was guilty of tail-endism *politically*.

Unfortunately for Comrade Germain, this is not the first time

such a charge has been leveled against the American Trotskyist movement. In the thirties it was one of the first things you heard from the ultralefts. *Khvostism* was the word then—the original Russian word straight out of Lenin's writings of 1901-02. The Marlenites, in particular, for years regularly distributed leaflets at our meetings in New York denouncing James P. Cannon's *khvostism*.⁷⁰ They were beautifully mimeographed, too. One had to admire the persistence of the Marlenites, and also the consistency of their viewpoint, for they held that the ultimate source of this *khvostism* was Trotsky himself. Through the "French turn," Trotsky had tied the cart of the International Left Opposition to the bandwagon of the Social Democracy.⁷¹

But, it can be argued, just because the ultralefts of the thirties proved to be wrong, that doesn't mean that the SWP hasn't succumbed to tail-endism today. Of course. My only point is that I have heard this before.

The underlying assumption of Comrade Germain's argument is that the masses in the United States became angry over the casualties suffered by U.S. troops in a foreign war that made no sense. At the same time there was a "limited vanguard" in the United States that was prepared to support the Vietnamese revolution "till its final victory." What the SWP did, according to this impression, was confine itself to merely organizing the masses in demonstrations on a politically limited basis, that is, on a level the masses could understand, while neglecting—if not rejecting—the more politically conscious "limited vanguard." Thus the SWP tagged along behind the masses, utilizing its organizational know-how to give greater effectiveness to actions the masses themselves were pressing for, while missing the political opportunities to be found among the vanguard currents.

Precisely how the SWP ought to have taken advantage of the alleged opportunities among the "limited vanguard" elements who were prepared to support the Vietnamese revolution "till its final victory" is not spelled out by Comrade Germain. Should we have joined them in scorning mass mobilizations and contenting ourselves with waving the Vietnamese flag and shouting, "Victory to the NLF"? Should we have joined them in leaving the main contingent of marchers and pulling stunts like provoking the cops? Or should we have done something more ambitious like taking a soft approach to the Weathermen as the nearest equivalent in the American "limited vanguard" to the Argentine PRT (*Combatiente*)?

It would be most useful if Comrade Germain would take the

trouble to present his thinking more fully on the question of our possible errors in the antiwar movement and thus help to clarify a very important point of difference.

The truth is that from the very beginning, from the moment that Johnson initiated the large-scale intervention of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam, the SWP calculated the probable consequences, including the political perspectives opened up for American Trotskyism, and outlined a course that was adhered to until the troops were finally withdrawn. It is sufficient to check the discussion and the decisions at the SWP's 1965 convention to verify this. The record clearly shows the foresight displayed by the leadership of the SWP. This alone destroys the charge of tail-endism.

It could have been argued that the projections decided on at the convention were wrong, or partially wrong. But no one did so. Not anyone in the SWP. And not anyone in the Fourth International.

The SWP did not go directly to the masses. It went first to the vanguard sectors that were interested in doing something to oppose the war. There the SWP stood in a decided *minority*. It had to battle for its projected course of action against opponents of all kinds—the Stalinists, the pacifists, liberals, sectarians, and the “limited vanguard” of ultralefts and opportunists that looms so large in the thinking of Comrade Germain. The “limited vanguard” was strongly inclined to violent, guerrilla-type actions by a small minority in isolation from the entire population. In this chaotic conglomeration, the representatives of the SWP directed their arguments to all sectors. And our press did the same.

In the meetings of the antiwar committees, endless hours went into debating the most effective course of action. The cleavages occurred along the following main lines:

1. A tendency headed by the Stalinists that was interested in diverting the antiwar movement into bourgeois electoral channels through support of bourgeois “peace” candidates.

2. A tendency of ultraleft persuasion that ranged from the narrowest and most dogmatic kind of sectarians to would-be guerrillas interested in winning publicity for themselves through “exemplary,” provocative, violent confrontations. The Stalinists and liberals were the major problem in the antiwar movement. Sometimes they blocked with the ultralefts.

3. The SWP and its allies, who sought to make the movement as broad as possible but above all to mobilize it in the form of

mass demonstrations in the streets. The logic of this was to accustom the masses to air their grievances through street actions, to accustom them to rely on themselves and not on the bourgeois parties, the Congress, or the White House, and to get the feel of the power of their numbers.

The line of the SWP was not only the best way to defend the Vietnamese revolution, as Comrade Germain wholeheartedly agrees, it was also the best way to advance the American revolution under the concrete circumstances. This was one reason it had such repercussions in the American political scene.

It is not true that the SWP had a *narrow organizational* approach to the antiwar movement, merely serving as stewards and sergeants, or organizers of what is known in France as a *service d'ordre*, and that it neglected efforts to enter into a dialogue with the "limited vanguard." The dialogue took place as a clash of ideas and lines in the antiwar committees over several years. The SWP became more and more important in the antiwar movement because its political course—projected at the 1965 convention—won more and more adherents.

The key slogans advanced by the SWP became widely popular. The Stalinists began to feel encircled by Trotskyism. As for the "limited vanguard"—particularly such sectors as the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Weathermen—these currents either withered on the vine, retreated, were shattered by the success of the SWP and the Young Socialist Alliance, or slunk from the battle to trot after McGovern, supplementing this tail-ending with tail-wagging for the "peace" candidate of the Democratic Party.⁷²

The SWP recruited satisfactorily from the antiwar movement. Moreover the recruitment was on a high level, for those who joined did so on the basis not only of support to the Vietnamese revolution "till its final victory" but on the basis of an understanding of how best to defend that revolution in the United States, and concomitantly of advancing the American socialist revolution.

What about the relationship between mass consciousness and the consciousness of the leadership of the SWP? This is decisive in deciding whether the leadership was guilty of tail-endism. In defining "economism," Lenin said that its "principal feature . . . is its incomprehension, even *defence, of lagging*, i.e., as we have explained, the lagging of the conscious leaders behind the spontaneous awakening of the masses."⁷³ Was the leadership of

the SWP guilty of incomprehension, of lagging, while the masses spontaneously pushed ahead?

The evidence shows that the leadership of the SWP saw the potentialities *from the moment President Johnson's decision to plunge into Vietnam became known*. The perspective of mass mobilizations, centered around the demand of immediate withdrawal of the troops, was adopted after the first campus-based actions initiated by the Students for a Democratic Society demonstrated the possibilities. The SWP pressed this line, not in the wake of others, but as *a small minority in opposition to all the other sectors of the vanguard*. And by all the means at its disposal—which were nevertheless painfully modest—the SWP *sought to raise the consciousness of the masses with regard to the true nature of the U.S. intervention*.

The degree of success achieved in raising the consciousness of the masses is another question. Some comrades may hold that little or nothing was accomplished—if I am not mistaken Comrade Germain can be counted among their ranks. My own view is that the course followed by the SWP in the antiwar movement did leave a mark in popular consciousness. The mark is observable in the readiness with which the most diverse currents in the United States take to the streets nowadays to air their grievances and to solicit support for their demands. Such actions seem as natural today as they were unnatural in the time of McCarthyism. It is part of the explanation for the swiftness with which the women's liberation movement blossomed in the streets, and the swiftness and widespread nature of the protest actions over sudden spurts in the cost of living. The current thirst for more and more details in the Watergate scandal is another indicator of the alteration in mass consciousness brought about by the antiwar movement and its boldness in carrying its protest into the streets.

I do not claim that the SWP itself has been able to capitalize as yet on these changes in the consciousness of the masses. I claim only that the SWP played a significant role in starting the process and that its assumption of this role was completely conscious.

In the stage now opening in the United States the consequences of the Vietnam War will come increasingly to the fore. High among those consequences is the changing attitude of the masses. We can expect new developments, probably involving increasing extension of the radicalizing process to the ranks of the working class. The SWP, too, has advanced as a consequence

of its participation in the antiwar movement and in the radicalization of the youth, from which it recruited a new generation of cadres. In fact the relationship of forces in the Left was greatly altered by these successes.

Far from experiencing any crisis because the "limited vanguard" suffered deep political erosion, the SWP is in better position than at any time in its history to take advantage of the coming openings.

Little USAs Around the Globe?

Let us consider another charge made by Comrade Germain—that the SWP has a "tendency to extend exceptional characteristics of the Black and Chicano liberation struggle in the USA to a generalized concept of 'Trotskyism = consistent nationalism' in all kinds of oppressed or semi-colonial nationalities around the world."

This is a strange charge. It is all the stranger in view of Comrade Germain's praise of the contributions made by the SWP in the field of nationalist struggles inside the United States. Listen to this:

One of the greatest political achievements of the SWP in the last 15 years has been the correct understanding of the peculiar way in which the national question—the question of the oppression of the Black and Chicano people—poses itself inside the United States. . . . The analysis and projections made by Comrade George Breitman in that respect were among the most important creative contributions to Marxist thought realised by the world Trotskyist movement since the murder of Leon Trotsky.⁷⁴

If the leaders of the SWP stand on a high enough theoretical level to correctly apply the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky on the national question to the particular and very complex development of the Black and Chicano movements in the United States, that would seem to be a rather substantial indication that they have correctly assimilated those teachings with regard to the national question in countries coming much closer to the "norm." Yet Comrade Germain's charge boils down to accusing the SWP leadership of not really understanding Lenin and Trotsky on the national question. For, to believe Comrade Germain, everywhere outside of the United States—and that's a lot of territory—the SWP is simply dead wrong on the national question. He declares:

"To extend the same method of approach [the method used to reach a correct position on the Blacks and Chicanos—J.H.] to Quebecois nationalism, Arab nationalism, Bengali nationalism, Ceylonese nationalism, not to speak of 'anti-US imperialism,' Canadian or European nationalism, means to court disaster."⁷⁵

The only substance to this part of his counterattack is that while Comrade Germain has no differences whatsoever with the position of the SWP on the Black and Chicano movements—"among the most important creative contributions to Marxist thought realised by the world Trotskyist movement since the murder of Leon Trotsky"—he does have some differences with the SWP on the national question elsewhere.

Is the SWP position on the national question outside of the United States a mere extrapolation of its position on the Black and Chicano movements? Or is Comrade Germain exaggerating? The differences he has with the SWP on this issue could just as well stem from different appreciations of how to apply the method developed by Lenin and Trotsky in certain places of particular interest to our movement such as Ireland or Palestine, without the Blacks or Chicanos even entering in.

When Comrade Germain gets around to explaining his precise differences with the SWP on the national question, this may be seen much more clearly than now because it will become more concrete. Meanwhile he may count it a certain advantage to have induced some comrades to dismiss in advance the views of the SWP leaders on the national question in Ireland or the Middle East as merely part of a provincial effort to extend their findings on the national question in the United States to the globe as a whole. For more on this, I recommend Gus Horowitz's contribution "Comrade Germain's Errors on the National Question."⁷⁶

It is not solely on the national question that Comrade Germain advances such a puerile explanation. The main source of the differences currently under debate in the Fourth International, in his opinion, is to be found in one-sided national experiences that have been extrapolated onto the international arena. With regard to Bolivia and Argentina, the masses, he says, began to understand "the need for armed struggle" and began applying it.

Under these specific circumstances the approach towards armed struggle by revolutionary Marxists had obviously to be different from what it was in the USA and Canada. To have an identical approach to this problem in North and South America means to generalise nationally limited and determined experiences into universal rules. In our opinion,

this is to a large extent the origin of the present discussion between the leadership of the SWP and the majority leadership of the Fourth International.⁷⁷

In the same vein, he writes:

There is a real danger that cadres recruited, educated and experienced essentially through actions determined by these national peculiarities will tend to generalise them on an international scale; that methods of party building, of tactics and orientation in the mass movement which may be adequate in the United States will apply to Argentina or Bolivia where they are inappropriate to the needs of the given stage in the class struggle; that Argentine comrades will commit the same mistakes by generalising their own experience to the whole of Asia or Southern Europe; the European comrades will tend to export their own experiences to Chile or to Mexico.⁷⁸

That possibility exists, of course, and we must be alert to the danger. Concretely, however, the opposite danger has proved to be more real. This is the danger of generalizing from the experiences of others, even the bad mistakes of others, and *importing* them. Comrade Germain really ought to study more carefully the instances we have pointed out in earlier contributions where the guerrilla orientation decided on for Latin America found a reflection in other sections.

In any case, we express our appreciation to Comrade Germain for admitting the possibility that European comrades might tend to export their own experiences to Chile or to Mexico. Actually, however, he does not cite any instances of this. It seems that he has been able to find disturbing examples only in the Western Hemisphere.

His estimate of the leadership of the SWP is hardly flattering. The opinion that we tend to extend our position on the Black and Chicano struggles to Québec, the Middle East, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and God knows where else, shows that Comrade Germain considers us to have no grasp whatsoever of the international nature and structure of capitalism. As he sees it, we in the SWP regard all other countries as but small replicas of the United States, in which all problems are roughly the same qualitatively and in which our positions, particularly on party building, must perforce fit well, if on a Lilliputian scale.

How Comrade Germain reached such a view is not easy to ascertain. From Europe it may well seem that living on the western shores of the Atlantic is not conducive to studying,

assimilating, and applying the basic concepts of Marxism.

As to exporting lessons on party building derived primarily from the American scene, all of the leaders of the SWP understand that the possibilities are quite limited. The main contribution the SWP can offer to the International lies along somewhat different lines.

One of the principal features of the American Trotskyist movement, setting it apart from its very inception from all other currents in the American radical movement, has been its effort to learn from the Russian Leninists and to apply their strategy and the lessons of their experiences to the American scene. It takes little reading in the writings of Comrade Cannon to discover that one of his main concerns has been to drive home by both precept and example the need to learn from the Russians. *In this respect, the SWP is not a typical American organization.* In theory and program the roots of the SWP lie in the Europe of Marx and Engels and the Bolsheviks.

To learn from the Russians is conceived by the SWP as applying not only to revolutionists in the U.S. but to those in other lands. That it could be done at least to a certain degree in the U.S. with all its peculiarities shows that it can be done in other countries; and in all likelihood much better.

In relation to the Fourth International, the American Trotskyists have sought to defend and build on the Bolshevik tradition and to help others do the same.

It is true that we also represent the continuity of the American revolutionary socialist movement going back to the Haymarket martyrs, and this may be of some interest to comrades in other lands if for no other reason than the fact that we are laboring for the world socialist revolution in the heartland of imperialism, where the decisive battle with capitalism will be fought out. Trotsky, as is well known, was intensely interested in the class struggle in the United States and its potentialities. But we know very well what difficulties face any attempt to export the *American* revolutionary experience. We consider the difficulties to be at least comparable to the effort we in the United States must make to absorb the lessons—positive and negative—of party building in India, Japan, Argentina, or France.

It is sad that Comrade Germain has never understood our attitude. From his viewpoint the SWP, suffering from a messianic delusion, is seeking—without at all being aware of it—to export American *khvostism*. Naturally he will have none of it.

From the viewpoint of the SWP, matters appear in a different

light. Our continuity is not only American, it is *Russian*; and this Russian continuity is quite direct. It is the continuity of the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky that we want to maintain in the Fourth International against any challenge to them or departure from them. If there is a certain *khvostism* in this, we do not mind having it thrown up to us.

Tail-Endism on a Higher Plane

Comrade Germain's discovery that the SWP is a fountainhead of tail-endism in the world Trotskyist movement is rather recent. It came as he was searching for arguments to cover up the adaptation to ultraleftism that the majority of the United Secretariat has been guilty of since the Ninth World Congress. Comrade Germain's approach suggests to us that it might be worthwhile to consider the guerrilla orientation from a somewhat different angle from the one we have used up to now, which was to view its *effects*, or potential effects, on the program and practice of the Fourth International.

Lenin faced the problem in his time of revolutionists who discounted or did not see the importance of long-range political foresight and planning, as concretized in building a combat party, and who confined themselves to issues of immediate concern to the working class, thus finding themselves trailing behind the masses in a period of upsurge. He labeled this fault *tail-endism*. However, this does not necessarily exhaust the subject. As dialecticians it is worth asking, "Can tail-endism appear at a higher level?"

Without going into earlier examples, we can say from the recent experience of our own movement that the answer is yes. The majority of the United Secretariat, with Comrades Maitan and Germain in the lead, have tail-ended the guerrilla movement in Latin America.

To show this, let us again review the facts concerning the political positions of the PRT (*Combatiente*). The leadership of this organization openly proclaims its indebtedness to Che Guevara as the main source of its ideology. It proclaims its indebtedness also to Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi Minh, General Giap, and Kim Il Sung. It acknowledges, rather grudgingly, that Leon Trotsky must likewise be regarded as a revolutionist.

The PRT (*Combatiente*) regards itself as being in the camp of the Albanian, Chinese, North Korean, and North Vietnamese

Communist parties, all of which it considers to be revolutionary parties. It points to the Cuban Communist Party as a model, and it follows its political leadership. As for the Fourth International, the PRT (*Combatiente*) is willing to say that it is not totally bankrupt, but it maintains that the Fourth International cannot be rehabilitated as a revolutionary force. Perhaps in a Fifth International the salvageable bits of the Fourth International could be included along with the genuinely revolutionary parties maintained by the governments of Albania, China, North Korea, North Vietnam, and Cuba.

The political direction in which the PRT (*Combatiente*) has been moving is shown by its following the lead of the Cuban Communist Party in approving the Kremlin's invasion of Czechoslovakia.

It is absolutely clear from its program that the PRT (*Combatiente*) is not a Trotskyist organization. Yet the Ninth World Congress recognized it as an official section of the Fourth International. How is such an error to be explained?

First of all, the delegates at that congress did not know that the PRT (*Combatiente*) held such views. This was not the fault of the PRT (*Combatiente*) inasmuch as they had indicated them in a substantial way in a pamphlet called *El Unico Camino Hasta el Poder Obrero y el Socialismo* ("The Only Road to Workers' Power and Socialism").⁷⁹

A copy of this pamphlet was brought to the world congress by a member of the PRT (*La Verdad*) and some of the delegates were able to get a look at it between sessions. However, the representatives of the majority of the United Secretariat assured the congress that the document represented only the personal views of the three authors, Carlos Ramírez, Sergio Domecq, and Juan Candela, at a certain stage, and that it did not represent the position of the organization, which stood on the program of the Fourth International.

Consequently, in deciding between the claims of *La Verdad* and *El Combatiente*, the two factions in the PRT, the delegates at the Ninth World Congress did not use a political criterion but merely a numerical criterion (as best as could be determined at the time) in settling on which held a majority in the section.

That was how a non-Trotskyist organization in Latin America became an official section of the Fourth International.

It was not until last December, when a member of the majority of the United Secretariat decided to make a self-criticism, that it

became known that at the Ninth World Congress the majority of the United Secretariat was aware of the fact that the PRT (*Combatiente*) did not stand on the program of the Fourth International and was not a Trotskyist organization.⁸⁰

The majority of the United Secretariat made a secret decision to use a soft approach toward the leaders of the PRT (*Combatiente*) in hope of getting into their good graces and gradually winning them over to Trotskyism. The objective, if not the method, was of course laudable—it was to gain a base for Trotskyism in the guerrilla movement. In this the objective paralleled that of the tail-endists of Lenin's day, who quite legitimately wanted to gain a base for socialism in the mass movement. However, the soft approach proved to be a procrastinating approach, and none of the majority of the United Secretariat ever got around to taking up the anti-Trotskyist positions held by the leaders of the PRT (*Combatiente*) and discussing with them why these positions were wrong in principle and should be given up in favor of the program and practices of Trotskyism.

This was not all. Representatives of the majority of the United Secretariat sat in leadership meetings of the PRT (*Combatiente*) where key questions were taken up, and did not voice any differences, according to the leaders of the PRT (*Combatiente*). On the contrary, they voiced approval of the course followed by the PRT (*Combatiente*).

We still have not come to the end of the story. Members of the majority of the United Secretariat publicly recorded their approval and satisfaction with the PRT (*Combatiente*). Again and again they pointed to the PRT (*Combatiente*) as a model section of the Fourth International, perhaps the only one outside of the Bolivian section that was really applying the line of the Ninth World Congress.

The majority of the United Secretariat took this stand in face of the fact that the PRT (*Combatiente*) continued to develop the line of *El Unico Camino*. In 1970 at the Fifth Congress of the PRT, a number of resolutions to this effect were passed.⁸¹ Comrade Maitan said a year later in a public article:

The strategic perspective the Argentine comrades are following is the one laid down by the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International—elaborated and made more precise by the last two national congresses of the PRT—of a prolonged armed struggle, a revolutionary war, which might involve the intervention of the imperialists and thus could not be

waged without profound ties to, and increasing participation by, the masses.⁸²

When *El Unico Camino* was finally published in an English translation in the *International Internal Discussion Bulletin* last October, its contents, along with some public declarations of leaders of the PRT (*Combatiente*), quite naturally shocked the cadres of the Fourth International. The majority of the United Secretariat, in anticipation of this unfavorable reaction, decided to open up a discussion with the "official section of the Fourth International."

This was done in a rather surreptitious way. I say "surreptitious" because the United Secretariat as a whole was not consulted about this move or how best to handle it. The Political Committee of the SWP learned about it only accidentally. It can be questioned whether opening up a dialogue with the PRT (*Combatiente*) was actually of primary concern to the majority of the United Secretariat. The gesture was much too little and much too late. Perhaps the move had something to do with a problem considered to be more acute—how to prepare the rank and file of the Fourth International for the facts about the situation in Argentina and the less than brilliant role of the majority of the United Secretariat in it. This would explain why they maneuvered surreptitiously; their own factional interests were placed above those of the movement as a whole.

They got the answer to be expected. The PRT (*Combatiente*) accused them of trying to organize a secret faction in the official section behind the back of the leadership. In addition, the PRT (*Combatiente*) broke off relations with the Ligue Communiste. And the PRT (*Combatiente*) demanded the expulsion of a leading member of the majority of the United Secretariat who had been entrusted with maintaining relations with them.

The leaders of the PRT (*Combatiente*) had previously indicated publicly that they did not view themselves as Trotskyists and did not like being called that. Lately they have again stressed this point to reporters of the capitalist press, telling them in addition that they have taken their distance from the Fourth International.⁸³

We now come to what might be called a "classical" case of tail-ending on a higher plane. In face of all that has happened, Comrade Germain still persists in defending the guerrilla strategy of the PRT (*Combatiente*). His defense of that course (and

the similar course of the Bolivian section) constitutes the most substantial part of "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," his weightiest contribution up to now in the internal discussion.

There is a certain grotesqueness to this. The guerrillas have spat in his well, given him the brush-off, and are departing in the company of bitter political enemies of the Fourth International. Yet Comrade Germain continues to run after them, shouting: "Don't leave us! You did wonderful! You carried out the line of the Ninth World Congress!"

And to veteran Trotskyists who disagreed with that guerrilla line, Comrade Germain shakes an admonishing finger: "Tail-endists! You are following in the wake of the masses!"

To cap everything, it requires no theoretical genius to discover the source that has polluted the program of the official Argentine section of the Fourth International. It has been named by the PRT (*Combatiente*) leaders, who are proud of it. It is Maoism, Guevarism, and a little Brezhnevism via Havana.

Could anything be plainer than the fact that the main purpose of Comrade Germain's "exposé" of the alleged tail-endism of the SWP, the PST, and the LSA/LSO in relation to the masses is to cover up his own very real tail-endism with respect to the Latin American guerrilla movement?

We are now in a position to grasp why Comrade Germain drags in so many subsidiary and irrelevant issues in his polemic. It is to avoid focusing on the pros and cons of the line on Latin America, the central issue in dispute. Defending an erroneous line, he is incapable of following a procedure that would be most conducive to the necessary full clarification required for the work of the next world congress.

Factional motives likewise determined other aspects of his document. Since the Ninth World Congress, the majority leaders have shifted from support of the orientation toward rural guerrilla war to support of urban guerrilla war, and then to defense of armed struggle in the abstract. Finally they were confronted with the disastrous results of their policy in Bolivia and Argentina. Comrade Germain set out to camouflage all this.

To muddy up the crucial issue at stake, he grabbed whatever scraps of evidence he could find to give plausibility to his concoction about tail-endism, which he put forward to counter the charge made by the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency of adaptation by the IEC Majority Tendency to ultraleftism.

Besides this, he sought to provide a catch-all document de-

signed to bridge over the differences among the leaders of his own tendency and to solicit support from those who have recognized the errors of the Latin American orientation but do not yet see that the resolution on Europe submitted by the IEC Majority Tendency points logically to similar results.

III. The Gap Between Theory and Practice

What We Have in Common

In the final section of his contribution "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," Comrade Germain raises a very important question. In discussing the need to build a leadership team in the Fourth International, he stresses the fact that a common program and common principles exist in our movement today, binding it together. He continues:

Majority and minority tendencies alike share the same views on the nature of capitalism and socialism, on the necessity of a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, on the theory of permanent revolution, on the necessity of political revolutions in the bureaucratised workers states, on the nature of labour bureaucracies, both in the unions and revisionist mass parties of the capitalist countries and in the bureaucratised workers states, i.e., on reformism and Stalinism, on the Leninist theory of organisation and of the state, on the Transitional Programme, on the need to build revolutionary vanguard parties of the proletariat, on the need to conquer the majority of the toiling masses before power can be wrested from the ruling classes, on the way to build a classless society. Important differences exist on the field of political analysis and evaluation of various orientations of intervention in the class struggle, in some parts of the world. But these differences do not destroy the programmatic unity of the movement.⁸⁴

To illustrate this point, Comrade Germain cited the following example:

As a matter of fact, a few months ago, leading representatives of the majority and the minority tried to edit together a full programme for the Fourth International, encompassing, in addition to the transitional programme, an analysis of class society, capitalism, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building of a classless society, following indications of Trotsky of 1938. They agreed without too many difficulties on practically the whole draft, except a couple of paragraphs concerning the exact formulations relative to the place of armed struggle in the class

struggle and the building of the revolutionary party. These differences in formulation reflect the differences at present discussed in the pre-world-congress discussion. But they likewise reflect the large field of programmatic agreement which ties the world movement together.⁸⁵

To further clarify the example mentioned by Comrade Germain, a few more details should perhaps be added. The project was begun several years ago in response to a suggestion made by Comrade Pia of Switzerland. The work was divided into three parts. Comrade Ernest Mandel undertook to write a draft on the first section, dealing with the origin of capitalism and the course of its development. Comrade Pierre Frank worked on the last part, dealing with the programmatic positions of the Fourth International vis-à-vis the degenerated or deformed workers' states and the type of society the Fourth International is battling for. I worked up a draft to go in between these sections. This was to be the main programmatic proposals of the Fourth International in the current international scene. As Comrade Germain indicates, I drew heavily on the Transitional Program, written by Trotsky in 1938.

On the sections drawn up by Comrade Mandel and Comrade Frank, no special difficulties were encountered. We found it easy to agree on a summary statement of the main contradictions of capitalism, how they arose, and what they point to, as well as a codification of the position of the Fourth International in the struggle against bureaucratism and for socialism. The difficulties came over the section I brought in. In fact we ran into somewhat of an impasse over it. Comrade Mandel then proposed that he bring in a revised draft. That draft, too, proved to be unacceptable. The same stumbling blocks, reflecting the differences under discussion in the International, remained. To me it was plain that the problems encountered in trying to reach a mutually satisfactory draft could not be resolved for the time being and that it was better to lay the entire project aside until the differences could be clarified and decided on at the next world congress. This procedure was agreed on.

Thus the example used by Comrade Germain may not be the best one, for it still remains to be seen whether the differences that stood in the way of agreement on a final draft will be resolved or whether they will develop into a dispute over programmatic questions.

However, not to disappoint Comrade Germain, I think that an example that does prove his point in the main can be found. No

great research is required. All that is needed is a reminder. In the very question that has led to the sharpest differences—the orientation of the Fourth International in Latin America—basic agreement exists not only on program but on the analysis of the broad economic, social, and political situation.

I called special attention to this as an observer at the Ninth World Congress. As early as February 1969, in the discussion preparatory to the congress, I noted that about “one half” of the draft resolution on Latin America consisted of “a summary of the economic, social, and political conditions in Latin America that point to the perspective of socialist revolution,” and that “the general conclusions outlined in the resolution are shared by probably all of the revolutionary tendencies and even by the more objective specialists in the imperialist camp. From the viewpoint of the Trotskyist movement there is every reason for the greatest optimism about the perspectives in Latin America.”⁸⁶

In a report given at a meeting of the New York branch of the Socialist Workers Party on June 4, 1969, I repeated this point:

There was general agreement on the first part of the resolution, which describes the conditions in Latin America as being prerevolutionary, almost revolutionary, or at least of explosive proportions over the entire continent. This situation has existed, in my opinion, in Latin America for about ten years or more, so that there was really nothing new in this, beyond recording how difficult it is becoming for the oligarchies in Latin America and their American backers to keep the lid on the situation.⁸⁷

In view of these statements, it is perfectly apparent that Comrade Germain's point is well taken that agreement on broad programmatic questions exists today in the Fourth International.

We are confronted with a puzzling paradox. In face of the solid programmatic agreement, how are we to account for the sharp differences that have arisen?

The contention might be made that one of the two sides (make your own choice) is simply playing a cynical game, professing agreement on the programmatic level while acting quite differently. It could be argued, too, that one of the two sides (again make your own choice) is of such low theoretical level that it really does not understand programmatic questions.

Still another hypothesis might be that class forces are bearing down on one of the two sides, and that because of their class origin, class composition, or lack of political consciousness, they have responded to these forces. Such may be the case in the final

analysis; however, if it is the case it has to be *proved*. That is, the mechanism by which the class pressure is exerted would have to be pointed out, and it would also have to be shown *why* there has been a response among the leaders to this pressure. Otherwise, reasoning along these lines would remain speculative and impressionistic. Lacking demonstration as to its validity, it could appear as mere factionalism.

Methodological Source of the Differences

What, then, is the source of the differences? This has been indicated by Comrade George Novack in his excellent contribution to the discussion, "Two Lines, Two Methods."⁸⁸ He calls attention to the chain of reasoning used by the majority of the United Secretariat in deciding on the guerrilla orientation that was adopted at the last congress. It was correct, he says, to incorporate certain broad factors into their analysis of the situation in Latin America such as the traditional use of the "officer caste to intervene, bridle or crush the unruly masses, and stabilize the system of private ownership through military regimes."⁸⁹

The methodological mistake of the majority, Comrade Novack continues, "was to transform long-range tendencies into absolutes and to slight the intermediate factors that dictate the choice of tactics best suited to advance the revolutionary movement at a given conjuncture. They violated the first maxim of Marxist thought: the truth is concrete."⁹⁰

Some of the aspects of the methodological mistake have already been debated. For instance, one of the first criticisms we made of the Latin American resolution was that it projected a *tactical* course for our movement on a *continental scale* and for a prolonged period. The sponsors of this sweeping tactic paid no attention to the criticism, but went ahead, orienting toward, preparing for, and engaging in guerrilla war for a prolonged period on a continental scale. Consequently it could only be concluded that they had elevated a tactic into a *strategy*, which was another methodological error. This raised a number of related questions, particularly the way the guerrilla strategy affected party building.

As adherents of dialectical materialism, the *origin* of the new orientation necessarily loomed large to us.⁹¹ The origin was no mystery inasmuch as the turn undertaken by the Ninth World Congress occurred in the context of the guerrilla line advocated

and practiced on a continental scale by hundreds of followers of Che Guevara, including Guevara himself. This was further confirmed by the insistence of Comrades Maitan, Mandel, Frank, and their partisans on the need to respond in a positive way to the practical questions raised by the guerrilla currents in Latin America. It was quite significant that in arguing about this need they disregarded the experience of our Peruvian comrades in leading peasant masses, although that experience stands as a widely recognized historical example of the capacities of Trotskyism on the level of practice. They likewise disregarded our suggestion to draw up a balance sheet on the chief guerrilla experiments in Latin America following the Cuban revolution, although such a balance sheet is a necessity if we are to place the practical questions in this field into proper focus.

The attempt to find at least sanction, if not an origin, for the new orientation in the works of Lenin and Trotsky remained unconvincing. It was too obviously intended as a reply to critical voices inside the Fourth International. In circles outside the Fourth International, particularly among most guerrillas, the authority of Lenin and Trotsky were considered irrelevant. Power grows out of the barrel of a gun, in their opinion; not out of the theories developed by the Bolshevik Party.

Let us consider a bit further the method used by the majority of the United Secretariat. In essence it consists of drawing tactical prescriptions directly from broad analytical projections that in themselves may be correct but that do not correspond to the current concrete situation.

A hypothetical example of the error may serve to illustrate the point. It could be predicted that in the United States the class struggle will sharpen in a very acute way within a short time, say four or five years. Strikes, it may be foreseen, will break out all over. These may well lead to a general strike that will pose the question of creating organs of dual power. *Therefore*—and this is where the mistake comes in—the *present* task of the revolutionary party must be to orient toward and begin practical preparations for a general insurrection.

For purposes of illustrating the point, I have purposely utilized an extreme instance. Lest this hypothetical example appear too absurd, it is worth recalling that in the United States one of the currents that emerged from the disintegration of the Students for a Democratic Society decided, on the basis of forecasting a revolutionary situation in the coming period, that the correct tactic for right now was, among other things, to form a "Red

Army." The Revolutionary Youth Movement I (not to be confused with the Revolutionary Youth Movement II) trained in karate, in "snake-dancing" in the style of the militant Japanese students, in "primitive weaponry" (Molotov cocktails, time bombs, and dynamite where available), and in "street fighting." This was in 1969. Where the RYM I is today no one knows. Perhaps they will surface from the underground when their general forecasts are borne out.⁹²

The methodological error may appear elementary and even self-evident. Why should we discuss it? The hard fact is that it is not understood by the comrades of the IEC Majority Tendency. The cleavage at the Ninth World Congress resulted from their insistence on laying down a general tactical prescription for an entire continent for a prolonged period. The relation between tactics and strategy has remained in dispute since then. It has arisen again in connection with the IEC majority resolution on European tasks and perspectives. Moreover, it is directly involved in such a crucial question as the relationship of the international center to the sections.

It is high time that we recognized the importance of a correct appreciation of tactics and its dialectical relation to fields of broader scope.

What do we require from theory to enable us to block out a correct political line for our movement? First of all, theory coupled with empirical data must provide us with a correct analysis of the objective course of developments in society. Secondly, it must provide us, for purposes of orientation, with correct projections on the most probable course of developments. Thirdly, it must provide us with accurate guidelines to action based on the objective course of developments but also based on past experiences of the revolutionary movement. (It is perilous to leave out the lessons of the past!)

While we demand these things of theory, we must also recognize that theory lags behind the motion of reality. Our analyses therefore carry built-in limitations that make adjustments necessary from time to time.

If we take phenomena in a very broad way and over a long time span, little adjustment is required. For example, we do not need to adjust the analysis showing that capitalism is doomed and that it will eventually be replaced by worldwide socialism through evolution of the class struggle.

The assessment of a shorter time span may well require some adjustment. A good example is the theoretical appreciation of the

depression-prosperity cycle. For the period since the eve of World War II, this had to be adjusted to take new developments into account that temporarily lessened the acuteness of the two phases.⁹³

In the case of highly concrete phenomena, it becomes dangerous to rely simply on a broad analysis, correct though it may be, in determining an axis of work. To do so opens the way to errors ranging from bad misjudgments to opportunist or ultraleft deviations.

Faced with a complex flow of data, many unknowns, and rapid changes, a revolutionary party must know how to make rapid adjustments. Anything that stands in the way of this is bad. The possibility even exists of a correct general analysis itself standing in the way of making needed adjustments if its limitations are not properly understood. Consequently our methodology must provide ways of making adjustments.

This is where tactics enter in. In dropping from long-range analysis to the question of immediate party tasks, a qualitative change appears; we move from strategy to the level of tactics. While their dialectical relationship must not be forgotten, mixing them up can prove costly. The very nature of tactical problems demands that they be left open for local, direct, immediate decision and action and not be incorporated into a broad analysis in the form of prescriptions or directives. This theoretical conclusion has been confirmed by the hard experience of generations of revolutionists.

For our movement, it should be part of the ABCs that decisions on a tactical level must be left to the leaderships of parties integrated into the national scene. There is no other way to bring revolutionary practice into proper correspondence with concrete reality. It is obvious that revolutionary experience and continuity of leadership play a key role in this. There is no substitute. Revolutions cannot be guided from afar. Many consequences follow from this, above all the importance of building sections that can stand on their own feet and make correct decisions.

It would be excellent if we could say that the methodological mistake committed at the Ninth World Congress was the first of its kind in the Fourth International. Unfortunately that would not be true. A bad instance occurred in the early fifties.

At that time the leadership of the Fourth International, mainly under the inspiration of Michel Pablo, came to the conclusion that another war between imperialism and the Soviet Union was inevitable. The analysis from which this conclusion was drawn

showed further that the Stalinist bureaucracies, or significant sectors of them, above all in Western Europe, could be expected to move in a leftward direction. Out of competition with them, if for no other reason, the Social Democratic bureaucracies could be expected to react similarly.

From this general analysis of what would most likely happen in the event of another war involving the Soviet Union, a direct general tactical conclusion was drawn for immediate application on a worldwide scale—"entryism *sui generis*."

The objective of the tactic was to bring the cadres of the small Trotskyist movement into close contact with the ranks of the Communist and Social Democratic parties so as to increase the possibilities of winning influence and gaining recruits once the war-to-come impelled left-centrist wings to form and move in a revolutionary direction.

Sections of the Fourth International embarked upon a tactic that did not correspond with the concrete situation and tasks facing them but with hypothetical situations that might come about sometime in the future—hopefully within three years or so.

When it became clear a half decade later that "war-revolution" was not in the offing, new reasons for following the tactic of entryism *sui generis* were found. The net effect of that was to convert entryism *sui generis* into something more than a tactic. It was pursued with iron discipline for about seventeen years; and wearing a left-centrist mask became a way of life for some comrades. In many instances the end result was a disaster; in some simply zero. It is dubious that it accomplished anything in any country that might not have been done more easily and surely by other means. But that is another story.

In arriving at the original decision to make a turn to entryism *sui generis*, Pablo overlooked or discounted the possibility of countertrends that could postpone the date of the imperialist war against the Soviet Union.

This historical background offers considerable illumination on the derivation of comparable orientations today. It is clear that one of the problems facing our movement, a problem lying at the heart of the current dispute, is the existence of a dangerous gap between theory and practice. Despite a correct analysis of the main economic, social, and political trends in Latin America, the Ninth World Congress, through incorrect methodology, projected a course of action that led the official sections of the Fourth International in Bolivia and Argentina into catastrophes.

Tactics Affect Program

The most striking example of what the gap between theory and practice can lead to is provided by the experience with the PRT (*Combatiente*). The majority of the United Secretariat maintained that the official section of the Fourth International was carrying out in model fashion the line decided on at the Ninth World Congress. The politics of the PRT (*Combatiente*), however, was not Trotskyist; it was Guevaraist. How could an organization hewing to Guevaraist positions carry out in practice the program of the Fourth International, which is Trotskyist?

One possibility is that the PRT (*Combatiente*) had such a gap between its theory and practice that it put a low rating on its political positions. The other possibility is that the majority of the United Secretariat had such a gap between its theory and practice that it disregarded Trotskyist political positions, accepting the practice of the Argentine Guevaraists as an expression of its own political orientation.

These flagrant contradictions were resolved by the PRT (*Combatiente*), which knew that after all it was not a Trotskyist organization and which saw, as its positions finally became known to the rank and file of the Fourth International, that it could not hope to win the majority it had hoped for. To remain in a minority position was intolerable to the leaders of this guerrilla group—politics doesn't count that much with them. They therefore decided to bring their romance with the majority of the United Secretariat to a close. Perhaps the Cubans helped them to reach this decision.

From this telling example, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the majority of the members of the United Secretariat downgraded politics. They put it on the shelf in return for a guerrilla grouping they could boast of as being "Trotskyist."

This lowering of political standards came as a consequence of the gross error in tactical orientation committed at the Ninth World Congress. Persistence in the error began to affect the firmness of the support given by the United Secretariat majority to the program of our movement. They bent to the politics and program of a Guevaraist formation. Tactics thus served notice of its dialectical relationship to program.

It is true that the leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency are trying to recover from their backsliding by beginning to offer political criticisms of the PRT (*Combatiente*). This is a welcome

turn, but the motives for it remain clouded inasmuch as no explanation has been offered up to now on how it could happen that the majority of the United Secretariat found itself in tow to a Guevaraist group.

The ramifications of the error extend in multiple directions, as I have noted above. One of the most evident is in party building. This is hardly surprising, for in the revolutionary struggle the unity of theory and practice finds its most palpable expression in the building of a party to guide the way in overcoming capitalism and building socialism. A gap between theory and practice inevitably registers most acutely here. That is one reason why the Leninist theory and practice of party building has been a key issue in every serious internal struggle in the revolutionary Marxist movement for three-quarters of a century.

The central organizational objective of the Fourth International and its leadership is to help build strong sections of the Trotskyist movement, utilizing the approach exemplified by Lenin in constructing the Bolshevik Party. In Argentina since 1969 we have been provided with a truly exceptional sample of how the two opposing lines have promoted or obstructed this aim. What have been the gains and losses for the Fourth International there?

The closest that Comrade Germain comes to an itemized balance sheet on this in his lengthy document is as follows: "According to the information available, the contention of the minority document that the PRT is today much weaker than the Verdad group in militants is subject to some doubt too."⁹⁴ This assessment implies that the two groups stand about on a par, so far as the International is concerned. In actuality this is not the case.

The 1969 congress recognized the PRT (*Combatiente*) as the official section on a numerical basis. The majority banked everything on the PRT (*Combatiente*), backed it to the hilt, censured anyone who dared doubt the correctness of its course and conduct, and shielded it from all criticism until the end of 1972. The PRT (*Combatiente*) was held up as a model that showed the way to the rest of the world movement and demonstrated in action what the 1969 turn could achieve. The PRT (*La Verdad*), on the other hand, was denied help, was publicly attacked, and virtually read out of the Fourth International.

And what was the outcome? After giving birth to four or five or more fragments, the PRT (*Combatiente*) disavowed Trotskyism, severed connections with its principal sponsor, the Ligue Commu-

niste of France, and took its distance from the Fourth International. The negative experience with the PRT (*Combatiente*) ought henceforth to be included in a handbook on party-building methods under the heading: "How to Ruin a Section From Afar."

The PRT (*La Verdad*) tendency, on the other hand, came out of semilegality, fused with the Coral wing of the Argentine Socialist Party, conducted an extensive, energetic, and principled electoral campaign under adverse circumstances, increased its numbers and influence among the advanced workers, and created a youth organization of some size. Today it has assembled the largest group of Trotskyists in the history of our Latin American movement.⁹⁵

Who will contest these facts? They speak louder than sophistical arguments. The group that carried out the line of the Ninth World Congress brought nothing but political discredit to the Fourth International. The group that followed the traditional methods of our movement based on a bold and flexible application of the Transitional Program has grown considerably and is loyally committed to the Fourth International.

These contrasting consequences say a great deal about the right and wrong approaches to party building, the worth of the contending lines, and the importance of correct tactics in advancing the Fourth International.

Before leaving this point, let me state once more why we have not responded to Comrade Germain's repeated challenges to outline a concrete alternative of "armed struggle" different from the one adopted at the Ninth World Congress. *We are opposed in principle to projecting tactics for a continent, for an indefinite period, and especially from afar.* Ultimately such projections can undermine programmatic positions.

To have responded with an "alternative" of that kind would have meant falling into the same basic error as that committed by the majority at the last world congress.

The course we have proposed is to continue carrying out one of the primary objectives of the Fourth International—to create national leaderships capable of correctly working out tactics on their own, applying them, and changing them as needed. This is one of the key goals in party building along with multiplying the cadres, extending their roots in the masses, and moving toward the toppling of capitalism and establishment of a workers' state.

However, in Latin America we can offer two examples of tactical courses that were correct in the main in contrast to two incorrect courses. The one was the course followed by Hugo

Blanco in Peru as against the course followed by Daniel Pereyra. The other was the course followed by the PRT (*La Verdad*) in Argentina as against the course followed by the PRT (*Combattente*).

On the Historical Background

The Fourth International has held together much longer than its three predecessors. The First International, founded in 1864, came to an end nine years later, in 1873. The Second International existed as a revolutionary organization from 1889 until 1914—twenty-five years. The Third International lived from 1919 to 1933—only fourteen years, although it was not formally dissolved by Stalin until 1943. The Fourth International, born in 1938, is not only still alive in 1973—thirty-five years later—it is growing and expanding.

It must be said, however, that it was not the intention of the founders of the Fourth International to create an organization that would be noted for its longevity. The time span that was envisaged before it would achieve success can be judged from Trotsky's prediction in 1938 that within ten years it would have followers to be counted in the millions. The Fourth International was founded on the eve of World War II. In view of the Kremlin's counterrevolutionary policies, we had no expectation whatsoever that the oncoming holocaust could be averted, although we fought tooth and nail against it. We did confidently expect that in the aftermath of the war we would see revolutionary storms that would finally sweep away capitalism and establish socialism. That is, in 1938 we thought it would be only a few years until powerful revolutions broke out. (Our calculation was that because of its greater destructiveness and ferocity, World War II would generate universal revulsion more quickly than was the case in World War I and therefore would not last as long.)

Instead of a few years, we have seen decades pass, and it is still hazardous to set any specific time bracket for the decisive overturn of capitalism, although we know that it is inevitable.

This long delay in the realization of our perspectives has put the Fourth International under considerable strains at times. In relation to the current discussion, a brief review of certain problems we ran into over the years may prove helpful. All of them relate to victories over capitalism that nonetheless served in a contradictory way to postpone the final showdown.

1. *The victory of the Soviet Union in World War II.* For world

capitalism as a whole, this was a catastrophe of the first order, for it meant preservation of the basic conquests of the October 1917 revolution despite a colossal attempt to liquidate them. At the same time, the victory temporarily strengthened Stalinism to the disadvantage of Trotskyism.

This contradictory outcome offered no particular theoretical difficulties for our movement. From our analyses we were able to correctly forecast that in the final analysis the triumph of the Soviet Union would undermine the basis of Stalinism.

Nonetheless the new lease given to Stalinism hurt our movement by deferring major victories for us. We were kept on the defensive even in circles that were not unsympathetic to Trotskyism. A fresh impulse, for example, was given to the position that Stalinism had played a progressive role despite its brutal and reprehensible methods (Deutscher, for instance).⁹⁶

2. *The overturns in Eastern Europe.* Once again these signified formidable blows to capitalism. Yet they also served to set back the struggle for revolutionary socialism, since they created illusions that capitalism could be ended by bureaucratic-military means.

We encountered some difficulties on the theoretical side in accounting for the overturns and the nature of the resulting states. These were resolved by the fact that if the borders of the Soviet Union had not been extended to encompass Eastern Europe (with the exception of Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, and part of Poland) at least these countries had become a buffer zone and their economic and political structures had been converted into facsimiles of those in the Stalinized workers' states.⁹⁷

3. *The revolutions in Yugoslavia and China.* These constituted major defeats for capitalism. They also had negative sides, for they placed state power in the hands of leaders trained in the school of Stalinism. In both instances, the Soviet victory over German and Japanese imperialism that made possible the temporary strengthening of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, had the further effect of fostering the implantation of structures in Yugoslavia and China modeled on those of the Stalinized Soviet Union.

The highly contradictory nature of the revolutions in Yugoslavia and particularly China led to theoretical difficulties that affected political estimates and tactical orientations. Our movement has not yet fully clarified some of these.

The political effects inside our ranks were more serious than in the cases of the Soviet victory over German imperialism and the

succeeding overturns in Eastern Europe undertaken under occupation by the Soviet armies. A few cadres succumbed to Titoism.⁹⁸ More felt attracted to Maoism. Even such a seasoned leader as Arne Swabeck of the SWP became ensnarled in Mao Tse-tung Thought.⁹⁹

There were more subtle changes that affected the Fourth International.

Pablo, for instance, began to doubt that the Fourth International really had a future of its own. He toyed with the idea that perhaps the Fourth International was being bypassed. The logic of this view was that the pattern of the Russian revolution would not be repeated—the revolution in other countries was cutting a different channel. Pablo kept these thoughts pretty much to himself, only giving hints of his preoccupation and not fully expressing himself until after he had left the movement in 1965. There can hardly be any doubt today, however, that his unusual interest in the possibility of part of the Soviet bureaucracy moving away from Stalinism toward Trotskyism was motivated in part by his doubts about the Fourth International. He placed more hope in the lower echelons of the bureaucracy than was justified. Similarly these doubts may have entered into his calculations in pressing for entryism *sui generis*. He placed undue hopes in sectors of the Communist and Social Democratic parties.

This may likewise explain why he placed such confidence in developments among the followers of Ben Bella in Algeria and did not press energetically for recruitment to the Fourth International during the period when we had close links with the fighters for Algeria's freedom from French imperialism.¹⁰⁰

Of course there was a positive side to Pablo's interest in the possible formation of left-centrist wings in the Social Democratic and Stalinist parties. Intervention in those parties, as in other sectors of the radical movement, is an integral part of the struggle for leadership of the working class. All challenges emanating from those areas must be met with the appropriate tactics. The condition, however, is not to place the slightest political confidence in these sectors, and to intervene with the sole perspective of building the Fourth International, that is, recruiting to our own forces.

The postponement of the socialist revolution in the main bastions of capitalism increased our difficulties and induced some cadres to turn away from the main course followed by the Fourth International. They thought that perhaps shortcuts could be found; perhaps other forces could be impelled to move forward.

This mood made it possible for a tactic like entryism *sui generis* to become entrenched and become converted into a virtual dogma in some sections of the Fourth International.

4. *The Cuban revolution.* American imperialism has not yet recovered from the shock of "losing" Cuba. It is noteworthy that Nixon found it easier to go half way around the world to shake hands with Mao than to permit a single Cuban diplomat to take up residence in Washington.

We, of course, considered the Cuban revolution a great triumph, not only for the fresh confirmation it gave to the theory of permanent revolution but for the fact that it was led by a non-Stalinist leadership. This was a harbinger of things to come.

Our analysis showed that we had to recognize the new state as a workers' state, and to support it accordingly. However, some of the cadres did not agree with this. In Britain and France it led to a split headed by Gerry Healy and Pierre Lambert, and was a key factor in their opposition to the reunification in 1963.

On the negative side, the Cuban leadership failed to go beyond the limitations of the pattern of their revolution. They thought that it could be duplicated anywhere in Latin America or anywhere in the colonial and semicolonial world. Consequently they fostered and backed guerrilla experiments throughout the continent. Guevaraism gained the ascendancy.

The task facing our movement was to maintain contact with the guerrilla movements, to defend them from persecution, to debate with them, even try to involve them in certain types of action—but above all continue the patient spadework required to root our own forces in the masses.

We managed to do this fairly well. However, there was an overhead cost to maintaining contact with the guerrilla forces. Some comrades were recruited by the guerrillas and left the Fourth International. Still worse, various proposals that were brought up from time to time showed that guerrilla war and its possibilities had begun to fascinate various leading cadres.

This mood, or leaning, took a qualitative turn following the death of Che Guevara and the emotional response among the radicalizing youth to his martyrdom. Coinciding with the heavy recruiting achieved by the French section in the May-June 1968 days and their aftermath, the qualitative turn crystallized in the form of the guerrilla orientation presented at the 1969 world congress.

Thus the combination of partial advances of the world revolution and the temporary strengthening of various petty-bourgeois

currents (including Stalinism) led to certain oscillations in the course followed by the Fourth International since the close of World War II. In the aftermath of the Soviet victory, the overturns in Eastern Europe, and the Yugoslav and Chinese revolutions, sectors of the Fourth International were affected by the temporary strengthening of Stalinism.

For our movement as a whole this took the form mainly of tactical orientations that logically implied programmatic concessions and that if persisted in could have led to actual programmatic concessions. The evidence of this is to be seen in a series of individual cases, beginning with Mestre and Haston and ending with Arne Swabeck and Denis Freney (the Australian disciple of Pablo who joined the Communist Party there a couple of years ago).¹⁰¹

The drift in this direction was rectified to a large degree by the time of the Hungarian uprising in 1956, making possible the principled reunification of the world Trotskyist movement in 1963 and the dissolution of the factions that had existed for some ten years.¹⁰² A common view of the Cuban revolution greatly assisted in this, although it also led to the spin-off of such sectarians as Healy and his followers.

In 1969, however, another oscillation occurred, this time in the form of adaptation to the guerrilla movements in Latin America. While this began on the tactical level, the elevation of the guerrilla orientation to the level of a strategy was remindful of the previous period of entryism *sui generis*. If anything it was more dangerous.

To what degree the latest oscillation will affect the programmatic positions of the Fourth International remains to be seen. The stubborn refusal by the majority of the United Secretariat to recognize the lessons of events in Bolivia and Argentina is a bad omen. The outcome will be determined by the struggle of tendencies now going on in the Fourth International and the organizations in sympathy with it.

The Draft Theses on Party Building in Europe

The draft theses "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" was rejected by a minority of the members of the International Executive Committee at its meeting last December. Comrade Germain views this action with "great misgivings." "Obviously," he writes, "this rejection has opened a new stage in the international discussion."¹⁰³

He even speaks a bit emotionally:

We said that we viewed with grave misgivings the rejection, by the international minority of the European thesis, because this rejection at least implies the danger that its general line is being rejected. By rejecting that general line (without proposing any coherent alternative) the comrades of the SWP would be spitting into the well from which they'll have to draw all their water in the coming years.¹⁰⁴

As he sees it, those who were critical of the document should have contented themselves with offering some amendments. "Surely it would have been easy for the comrades of the minority to present half a dozen amendments on all kinds of disputed minor matters, while at the same time unequivocally stating their attitude towards the general line of the European Perspectives Document."¹⁰⁵

Much better than half a dozen amendments, a detailed criticism of the document was made at the IEC meeting. The text of this criticism has been published so that it is easily available. (See "A Criticism of the United Secretariat Majority Draft Resolution on 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe'—an Initial Contribution to the Discussion," by Mary-Alice Waters.)¹⁰⁶

The criticism made in detail by Comrade Waters is longer than the resolution. It deals with concrete questions, not broad generalizations. It should thus be no great problem for Comrade Germain to rewrite the European perspectives document in light of the considerations advanced by Comrade Waters. By meeting these criticisms, he would most certainly win the votes of those who found the first draft unsatisfactory.

In my opinion, the criticisms advanced by Comrade Waters are valid. There is no need to repeat here what she said. I can, however, add a few observations that Comrade Germain might find useful if he should decide to undertake improving the first draft.

The European perspectives document includes material that is valid. For instance, I find the general analysis of the economic, social, and political crisis of European (and international) capitalism to be acceptable. I think this material could be converted into an excellent article that would be appreciated both within the Fourth International and in rather broad circles outside of it.

In this respect the document is reminiscent of the structure of the Latin American resolution that was passed at the last world congress. The section of that resolution dealing with the general

crisis of capitalism in Latin America was acceptable to all the delegates. The comparable material in the European perspectives document even stands at a higher level, for it is more detailed and placed in a broader context.

Much of the analysis of the changing subjective conditions is likewise good and could possibly be made generally acceptable to the cadres of the Fourth International if the ambiguities noted by Comrade Waters were cleared up.

These sections of the European perspectives document—in reality they deal with the background—naturally predispose readers to accept what follows. I believe that is one of the reasons why many of the comrades concluded, upon first reading the theses, that the document should be adopted as a whole.

It is precisely when we come to the axis of work for the European sections in the immediate period that the document fails. In this respect, too, it is reminiscent of the Latin American resolution.

The main methodological error it makes, as Comrade Waters has pointed out, is to prescribe uniform tactics on a continental scale for the Trotskyist movement; whereas tactics by their very nature, as we have seen, must correspond to highly concrete national situations. Still worse, the continental situation for which the tactics are prescribed is a projected future situation, not the immediate situation.

The projected time schedule, moreover, is highly optimistic. While it is stated that “It would be futile to attempt to set up a possible timetable in advance,”¹⁰⁷ a timetable is nonetheless included:

But the fact that we are only at the beginning of the deepening social crisis, that neither the extent of unemployment nor the political level of the workers’ struggles yet confronts the bourgeoisie with an immediate question of life or death, allows us to envisage a period spread out in most cases over four or five years before the decisive battles are fought.¹⁰⁸

The “four or five years” thus appears to be the outside limit. The “decisive battles” may come sooner. We read: “The socialist revolution is once again on the agenda in Europe, not just in a broad historical perspective (in this sense, it has been on the agenda since 1914), but even from a conjunctural point of view.”¹⁰⁹

I hope that the authors of the resolution are right. I will add that it is good to be optimistic. However, it is a mistake to ask our

movement to vote for or against predictions specifying a time schedule as specific as the one in the document. It is a much worse mistake to base *present* tactics on a prognosis that may not be confirmed so far as the time bracket is concerned.

So it's four or five years before the decisive battles; and if we haven't won leadership of massive sectors of the working class by then, the pendulum will inevitably swing the other way and fascism will come to the fore. "If a new revolutionary leadership is not built in the time remaining to us, after successive waves of mass struggles (some of which will certainly surpass even May '68 in France), the European proletariat will experience new and terrible defeats of historic scope."¹¹⁰

That ominous perspective gives urgency to the prescribed uniform tactic on a continental scale. In face of the life-or-death alternative, who is inclined to study the question more deeply and perhaps vote against the draft as an inadequate first try?

All this echoes the method used twenty-two years ago to stampede the movement into voting for the tactic of entryism *sui generis* and putting it into effect with the utmost haste. It was an immediate life-or-death question, you see.

What has entryism *sui generis* got to do with the axis of work for the next few years? Comrades, the European perspectives document actually contains a reference to that tactic. In fact it lists entryism *sui generis* as nothing less than one of three possible tactics to be used in party building. One out of three possible tactics! That means that entryism *sui generis* was not only excellent in the past, it can again become excellent in the future. Like the seventeen-year locust it has a cycle of its own.

I for one would vote against any resolution that includes a rider calling for approval of a historical question that is in dispute in our movement. It is a matter of principle. Why was it felt necessary to include this point in the document? Was it just to uphold the prestige of a few older leaders? I am inclined to think not. The authors really believe that there are but three tactics of party building and that entryism *sui generis* is one of them.

Of course, one could ask what happened to the fourth tactic—the tactic of party building through guerrilla war. The answer might well be that according to the method being followed in this document, backward Latin America has only reached the unitary level whereas Europe, a highly developed region, calls for the superior form of the triad.

And what about history? Doesn't that have to be voted on in the case of Latin America? Wasn't entryism *sui generis* once

prescribed for Latin America as well as the rest of the world? Well, you see . . .

No, the authors are correct in this. The tactic of entryism *sui generis* does demand a place in the European perspectives document. It is required out of logical consistency. The method that gave that tactic to the Fourth International is the same method used today to present our movement with the new tactic called "winning hegemony within the mass vanguard." Besides their version of history, the authors of the document are in reality calling for a vote of approval on the *method* that saddled us with entryism *sui generis* two decades ago. And, of course, by voting for that you simultaneously vote for continuation of this method, which has now spawned a triplet—"winning hegemony within the mass vanguard." The document has been deeply thought out, *n'est-ce pas?*

Please don't get me wrong. I'm all for winning, whether at the race track or in the mass vanguard. But as Comrade Waters has pointed out, winning is not a "tactic," however much we prefer it. It is an objective.

The conclusion is inescapable: on the main task of the document—to provide a clear orientation for work in the immediate future—absolute confusion reigns; the goal has been confounded with the means.

Because of the confusion of means and end, a result of an error in methodology, the European perspectives document where it should be clearest is the most obscure. Precisely what is the tactic it proposes? Or, to put it in different terms, what is the *content* of the tactic? In precisely what countries is it to be used and with what variations?

Comrade Germain makes an effort to clear this up on pages 44-45 of "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International." Let us follow his explanation:

1. The economic and social crisis in the imperialist countries of Europe will continue to deepen. Excellent. But that's not a tactic; it's part of the setting.

2. The working-class struggles in these countries will attain heights never before seen. Again excellent. That's a general prognosis everyone can agree with, particularly since the prognosis is scarcely an innovation.

3. The control of the treacherous bureaucratic leaderships over the working class is weakening. That's good; but it ought to be qualified as "relatively weakening." The point still pertains to the general situation.

4. We can expect "generalised mass struggles, massive strikes, general strikes, general strikes with factory occupations," and all this calls for "the preparation of these advanced workers for the appearance of factory committees, of organs of dual power. . . ." This is wonderful. Nevertheless it remains a general prognosis that includes a speculative time bracket.

5. On top of all these favorable elements, "a mass vanguard of young workers and students has appeared ready to act independently from the treacherous traditional working class leaderships." We join in the enthusiasm over this development. It obviously requires detailed treatment country by country if we are to work out effective tactics in relation to it. But this is not provided in the document.

As yet nothing concrete has been indicated on the tactical level. Judging from the time bracket in conjunction with the forecast of the appearance of organs of dual power, it would seem legitimate to conclude that the authors of the draft resolution envisage an immediate struggle for state power, yet, strangely enough, without projecting the corresponding tactics.

Not so, Comrade Germain replies. To conclude that the authors envisage an immediate struggle for power is only an "attempt at diversion." "There is no trace," he continues, "of such a childish illusion in the Thesis on the building of revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe."

So what tactic is proposed?

Comrade Germain tries again:

We speak about something entirely different, something which belongs to the main conquests of the Transitional Programme . . . that *before* they have already reached a revolutionary mass party capable of victorious leading a struggle for power, revolutionists should try by all means to transform generalised struggles of the working class into struggles where the question of power *starts to become posed before the masses*, where they start to build their own power organs as opposed to the organs of the bourgeois state. [Emphasis in original]

Whatever these generalities may mean, they do not outline any tactic. They still refer to a broad situation of indefinite duration.

"In other words," continues Comrade Germain, sensing that many comrades might have good reason not to understand what he is driving at, "that revolutionary Marxists should prepare themselves and the masses to have soviet-type committees, organs of dual power, arise out of general strikes."

How should we prepare ourselves and the masses? By propaganda, agitation, or action? Or a combination of these? Or should the question be limited to classes in the cadre schools of our movement?

Comrade Germain does not reply to such questions. He tells us instead that what he has said is strictly orthodox:

With Trotskyist groups much weaker than the present sections of the Fourth International, Trotsky projected such a line for countries like France, Belgium, Spain, between 1934 and 1936, because he correctly foresaw similar developments of the class struggle. By projecting a similar line today in Western Europe, we remain in the strictest Leninist-Trotskyist orthodoxy, under conditions of a gradually unfolding pre-revolutionary situation in highly industrialised imperialist countries.

What does this amount to? Taken at face value, it is nothing more than a restatement of the view that Europe will eventually see a repetition on a higher plane of the situation faced in the mid-thirties. That plus the proviso that it would be a childish illusion to imagine that a struggle for power faces us in the immediate future.

A set of goals accompanies this. The first goal is to win hegemony over the mass vanguard. The second goal is to place the mass vanguard in a key position with regard to the broad masses. If these goals are achieved, then by revving up the little wheel of our movement, the mass vanguard will begin to turn, and that wheel in succession will set in motion the big wheel of the broad masses, which will reduce the capitalist class and its system to dust. It is a very attractive perspective—if it will work.

Suppose that the main wheel, if only briefly, stalls or goes into reverse? That could cause quite a jam for the smallest wheel. Some, if not all, of its gear teeth might get stripped off.

It would not be accurate to say that the document leaves the problem of tactics completely open for the sections to work out in accordance with their concrete needs. The following lines are worth studying:

Revolutionary Marxist organizations the size of the present sections of the Fourth International cannot hope to win a general political following in the working class as a whole in one fell swoop. But they can, after reaching a certain threshold, win a political following among a layer of young vanguard workers by means of two tactics that must be used as much as possible in the present stage: (1) organizing national political campaigns on carefully chosen issues that correspond to the concerns of

the vanguard, do not run against the current of mass struggles, and offer a chance for demonstrating a capacity for effective initiative, even if still modest, by our sections; (2) our sections' ability to centralize their forces on a regional and national level in order to break the wall of silence and indifference surrounding certain exemplary workers struggles, wildcat actions and to start off solidarity movements.¹¹¹

What is meant by "*issues that correspond to the concerns of the vanguard*"? What is meant by "*demonstrating a capacity for effective initiative, even if still modest*"?

What is meant by "*certain exemplary workers struggles*"? All this is so vague, and perhaps so algebraic, that it is not easy to grasp what is meant, unless you are already in the know.

Perhaps this explains why the British adherents of the IEC Majority Tendency could split four or five ways over the meaning of the European perspectives document while declaring themselves to be unanimously in favor of it. What they unanimously favored was the attractive perspective outlined in the general appraisal of the situation. All of them favored "winning hegemony within the mass vanguard." As politicians with a certain sense of the need for allies and a following, they did not want to be recorded in opposition to that. What they could not agree on was how to go about winning. Their varying positions on this came as a consequence of the method used in drawing up the document.

The divisions among the various currents making up the IEC Majority Tendency in Britain testify to the ambiguous nature of the European perspectives document. However, it is no longer necessary to attempt to puzzle out whether the resolution includes a tactical orientation for Europe comparable to the one prescribed for Latin America. The June 21 action of the Ligue Communiste has provided us with an example of what is proposed.

The June 21 Action

The Fourth International is currently engaged in a worldwide solidarity campaign in defense of the French Trotskyists, for the release of Comrades Alain Krivine and Pierre Rousset, who are being held as political prisoners, and for rescinding the ban on the Ligue Communiste.¹¹² This is a top priority campaign and must remain so, for the dissolution of the Ligue Communiste, the largest section of the Fourth International, is a serious blow against the international Trotskyist movement as a whole. It

follows the banning of Ernest Mandel from France, the United States, Switzerland, Germany, and Australia. It is part of a reactionary international campaign in which agencies of both western imperialism and the Kremlin bureaucrats are picturing the Fourth International as a source of terrorism. Against this campaign, let's close ranks!

The first response to our solidarity campaign has been encouraging. Even the big Social Democratic and Communist parties in France felt required to express solidarity in rather emphatic ways. And we have received a sympathetic response in broad circles internationally.

All this, however, does not relieve us of the responsibility of assessing the meaning of the June 21 action, in which the Ligue Communiste responded to a scheduled meeting of the fascist and racist *Ordre Nouveau* by calling a counterdemonstration, the announced goal of which was to prevent the meeting from taking place. The Ligue's squad of marshals became engaged in a battle with the police, who were stationed in the area to provide physical protection for the fascists. Some aspects of the Ligue's action call for critical appraisal, which we hope has already been initiated by our French comrades.

To avoid any misunderstanding, let me state at the start that it was completely correct to appeal for a counterdemonstration against the fascist rally. It was also correct, in my opinion, to expect that the fascists or the police might attack some of the protesters. To be prepared to defend themselves against attack was a democratic right of those demonstrating against the fascist rally.

The tactics of the Ligue, however, were not in the pattern to be expected in the circumstances. Something different from the organization of a massive counterdemonstration was involved.

The substance of the June 21 action stands out quite clearly. The Ligue Communiste itself, together with a couple of smaller groups, became involved in a physical struggle with the repressive forces of the state in isolation from the labor movement. Police on duty were caught by surprise and suffered a considerable number of casualties. What was the purpose of the Ligue's action?

In a press interview, Alain Krivine, evidently in response to questions from all sides, explained:

To begin with, let me make one thing clear: We are not for "urban guerrilla warfare" or rural guerrilla warfare, or anything of the sort. We

do not think we can take power by hitting the police one by one with Molotov cocktails. . . . We resort to violence on a minority basis when we are forced to and when it can be understood by the masses.

We are not putschists. Only mass action can put an end to the fascist gangs. . . . But you cannot avoid your responsibilities. As long as it is not too late, fascism can be crushed in the egg. . . . And since all the traditional workers and democratic organizations have failed to assume their responsibilities, the revolutionists have had to do it.

We carried out the June 21 action as a test, a warning to the nation. We have shown the way.¹¹³

From this interview and from other material, it might appear that the Ligue Communiste had come to the conclusion that a fascist bid for power is imminent in France. No such conclusion, however, is to be found in the European perspectives document. It might be that the Ligue Communiste reached such a view after the document was written. But there is little evidence of that, and it is virtually certain that the more responsible leaders would oppose any such conclusion. They do not believe a fascist bid for power is imminent in France.

If fascism *were* on the march in France, the June 21 action, plus a series like it, could not crush it in the egg. In fact, such actions would in all likelihood set back the struggle against fascism. The social forces involved when fascism moves forward are of colossal weight, are not easily identifiable by broad sectors of the population as *fascism*, and require mobilizations of comparable weight to crush them. In the beginning, as Trotsky has pointed out, the fascists may hold the upper hand. The actions that can be taken by revolutionists must be carefully gauged from the viewpoint of their effectiveness in mobilizing the necessary counterforces. The first requisite is proof that fascism actually represents an immediate threat. Otherwise the actions come to be taken as merely crying wolf.

If fascism were a real, imminent danger in France, the Ligue's tactics were questionable in other respects. Fascist or racist meetings are illegal in France. But to call on the bourgeois state to enforce its own laws by banning such meetings or banning organizations of that character is not politically smart. First of all, it sows illusions that the bourgeois state can be trusted to struggle against fascism. The truth is that even if token bans are placed on the fascists, the state actually fosters their growth and is perfectly capable of utilizing the demand to ban the fascists as an excuse to ban the antifascist organizations.

It is a much stronger political position to point out that the state cannot be depended on to fight fascism, that it is a trap to call on the state to abrogate the democratic rights of the fascists, that it is sufficient to insist on the democratic right of the antifascists to stage counterdemonstrations and to conduct the struggle for socialism, the only real answer to the threat of fascism.

These points may be somewhat abstract inasmuch as the *Ligue Communiste*, so far as we are aware, does not believe that fascism is a concrete danger at the moment in France. But if the struggle against fascism was not actually involved in a serious way, what was involved?

It is possible that the leaders of the *Ligue Communiste* judged the social tensions in France to have reached such proportions that an action like the one June 21 could serve as the detonator of a revolutionary explosion. If that were the case, some questions are in order. Was the *Ligue* of sufficient size, was it well enough rooted in the masses to seriously make a bid for power? Was this the thinking behind the action?

Comrade Krivine answered, "No." He told the press, "We are not putschists."

Comrade Germain answered even more emphatically. As we have seen above, he considers it an "attempt at diversion" to suggest that the authors of the European perspectives document envisage an immediate struggle for power anywhere in Europe. "There is no trace of such a childish illusion in the Thesis on the building of revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe."

What, then, was the objective of the June 21 action?

The reasons for the course taken by the *Ligue Communiste* appear all the more obscure in view of the widespread opinion in the French far left, Left, and even liberal circles, that the decision of the Pompidou government to permit the *Ordre Nouveau* to hold its meeting was a deliberate provocation. In other words, Minister of the Interior Raymond Marcellin set a trap for the *Ligue Communiste*, his purpose being to inveigle the *Ligue* into engaging in a physical attack on the police that could then be used as an excuse for banning the *Ligue*.¹¹⁴

If this was the real situation, as it may well have been, two questions arise: (1) Why did Marcellin believe that the *Ligue* would respond to the provocation? (2) Why did the leadership of the *Ligue* fail to see the trap?

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the *Ligue* was seeking an occasion for a test (perhaps one in a series) of a tactical line it

had adopted. Marcellin was aware of this. He floated a lure. And the trout struck.

Perhaps Marcellin failed to take into account all the possibilities, and thus he may find himself dragged into the stream, or see the intended victim shake loose. On the other hand, it does not seem possible that our comrades in France would have moved as they did if the possible banning of the *Ligue Communiste* had entered into their calculations.

Thus it would appear reasonable to conclude that the June 21 action was visualized by our comrades as only one of a projected series aimed at "winning hegemony within the mass vanguard" by demonstrating a "a capacity for effective initiative" corresponding "to the concerns of the vanguard" without running against "the currents of mass struggles." This may have been what Comrade Krivine was referring to in a synthetic and elliptical way in his press interview when he spoke about the use of *minority violence* and the staging of a *test*.

In other words, the *Ligue Communiste* was engaging in a test of a tactical line developed in the past several years as a French variation of the orientation adopted at the last world congress for Latin America. The tactical line is the employment of *minority violence* on what are judged to be suitable occasions. The leaders of the *Ligue Communiste* saw an opportunity in the fascist meeting to mount an "exemplary action." The exemplary action was not urban guerrilla war as employed by the Tupamaros or the ERP; but it was close enough, I imagine, to win their applause. This tactical line of engaging in minority violence, of staging operations of this type in isolation from other groups and the masses, has been given sanction by the European perspectives document although in a form that is not easily seen by the uninitiated.

The tactic of minority violence proposed for Europe has not received wide or intensive discussion in the Fourth International despite the fact that it is now obvious that it will be put up for a vote at the next world congress in the form of a motion to approve the general line of the European perspectives document.

The Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency called the attention of the International to indications that such a line was under consideration in the *Ligue Communiste*. However, the form in which the proposed line appeared in the written discussion there made it impossible to gain a clear picture of it or of how far the leadership had gone in accepting or developing it. It appeared in a partial, perhaps distorted, way in a document submitted by Anthony,

Arthur, Jebrac, and Stephane. Later, under pressure from the majority of the central leadership, they withdrew some of the points they had formulated in a "guerrilla" sense.¹¹⁵ But they did not withdraw their general line. The discussion was thus unfortunately cut short, giving the impression of a behind-the-scenes understanding that got rid of the more compromising formulations advanced by the four comrades.

Their proposals and views were discussed in "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet" in the final section, dealing with the crisis in the Fourth International. Among other things they talked of a "continental revolutionary war" in Europe. They held that "It is not sufficient to mumble in front of the PCF that the peaceful road is in fact a bloody deathtrap; we must ourselves be capable of defining the practical consequences of our critique." They argued that "The perspectives that we are able to point out likewise imply a certain type of organization with regard to utilizing violence." They held that in view of the perspectives, "it is necessary to understand and to systematize the dialectics of mass violence and minority violence." They viewed this "as a permanent, essential axis of our activity. . . ." They urged that the *Ligue Communiste* must somehow get beyond the "propagandistic level." As they saw it, it is especially difficult to reply to the "questions raised by certain Latin American sections, or the Spanish comrades, if we close our eyes to our own future while holding forth on the whole range of international problems. It would be particularly dangerous to pose questions for other sections that we have not formulated for ourselves. . . ."

Here is a sampling of comments made by the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency on the document submitted by Anthony, Arthur, Jebrac, and Stephane:

As shown by this document, it is clear that some of the members of the *Ligue Communiste*—and not the least important sector—have grown impatient over the slow and arduous work of building a party in the Leninist way. They are looking for a shortcut. . . .

It is clear, moreover, that the role of military technique has assumed priority over the role of politics in their thinking. Their conviction as to the impenetrability of the Communist Party, the sluggishness of work in the trade unions, the inadequacy of proletarian methods of struggle, the messianism they feel in relation to violence, the justification they advance for "minority violence," the discounting of legality, the imagined virtues of working underground, and their organizational proposals all testify eloquently to that. . . .

. . . the four comrades draw the conclusion that it is possible to get

around the bourgeoisie and the Stalinists by giving up the fight for legality, going underground, and launching something like urban or rural guerrilla war (or a combination) in France. . . .

The desire of the authors to copy the Tupamaros and the ERP, that is, to apply to France the orientation adopted by the majority for Latin America, is the most serious aspect of the document. To merely project this orientation in a theoretical way for France is an ominous sign of the way the "turn" at the Ninth World Congress has led to the miseducation of a key layer of cadres in the *Ligue Communiste*. . . .

To any comrade who has followed the development of the discussion in the world Trotskyist movement since the Ninth World Congress, it should now be absolutely clear what dangers were involved in the "turn." A significant grouping in the leadership of the *Ligue Communiste* has gone so far as to propose applying the guerrilla orientation to France with the modifications they have outlined.¹¹⁶

Those concerned about semantics will argue that the tactic of minority violence, proposed for Europe and already being practiced in France, is not the same as the guerrilla orientation adopted for Latin America and practiced there by the POR (González) and the PRT (*Combatiente*). We can appreciate the sensitivity of some of the leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency on this question and are willing to assure them that we understand this, and *vive la différence*. However, it is the substance of the line that is at issue. From this angle it is obvious that the orientation of minority violence in Europe and the orientation of guerrilla war in Latin America are but variations of the same general line. The methodological approach is the same and the actions are comparable. What is the point of denying this?

Several observations are in order:

1. The comrades of the IEC Majority Tendency should be cautious about overoptimism in interpreting the meaning of the immediate reaction in the Left and far left to the June 21 action and its aftermath. Two questions are involved. One is the battle with the police undertaken by the *Ligue Communiste*'s marshaling squad. The other is Marcellin's order banning the *Ligue Communiste* and his forays (raid on the headquarters, raids on the homes of comrades, arrests, and imprisonment of Comrades Krivine and Rousset). These must be carefully distinguished in analyzing the consequences.

Under the impact of the solidarity campaign touched off by Marcellin's moves, the tendency has been to lose sight of the June 21 action. This could lead our comrades into mixing up the two and erroneously assuming that the widespread sympathy for the

Ligue Communiste was a direct consequence of the June 21 action; and hence that the "success" should be followed up by more "exemplary actions" of the same kind.

2. The setting of the June 21 action was depicted as if fascism were just around the corner. Crush it in the egg! Even if the Left and far left were to agree that the picture was accurate, no agreement exists in those circles that the Ligue Communiste initiated a correct course of struggle by engaging in an isolated physical battle with the police. Most, if not all of them, consider that the Ligue made a mistake. This opinion was also shown by the way other groups abstained from participating in the action. A clear warning sign!

As it becomes still more obvious that a fascist take-over is not an immediate threat, it can be expected that doubts as to the Ligue's course and the political acumen of its leaders will increase.

3. The flood of denunciations of Marcellin that came from parties and groups of the Left and far left, including the Social Democrats and the Stalinists, must be weighed as expressions of opposition to Marcellin's repressive measures, particularly the banning of the Ligue Communiste, rather than as expressions of solidarity with the action undertaken by the Ligue Communiste on June 21.

All of these forces have a political interest in opposing Marcellin's measures. They might be next on his list.

Because of their bases in the labor movement, the Social Democrats and Stalinists are compelled to put up at least some show of resistance to government threats to the unions, even if the threats are only implied. The case of the Ligue Communiste followed other cases in which reactionary forces singled out immigrant workers in particular as targets. The big demonstration on June 20 in defense of civil liberties and democratic rights, which was sponsored by the Communist Party and in which our comrades participated (without permission from the Stalinists), must be viewed in this light.

More importantly, in protesting the banning of the Ligue Communiste the Stalinists and Social Democrats want to score points over Pompidou's incapacity to allay social unrest, a field in which they have special resources and expertise. Denouncing Marcellin is a way of grooming themselves for posts in a new government should Pompidou drop dead. (It is rumored that he has cancer.)

Expressions of solidarity from these sources do not necessarily

equate to an overall political gain for the former *Ligue Communiste*, although every effort should be made to take advantage of them and to convert them into something more substantial than "get well" cards or funeral condolences. The chief avenue for this is through defense efforts and the at least temporary lowering of barriers to the rank-and-file members of these organizations.

The real worth of the sympathy for the present plight of members of the former *Ligue Communiste* would be seen very clearly if they were to attempt to follow up the June 21 action by staging similar "tests" a few times.

4. The now undeniable evidence that the European perspectives document includes the orientation of minority violence, as developed by the *Ligue Communiste*, deepens the crisis in leadership now facing the Fourth International.

Do the comrades of the IEC Majority Tendency really think they can put this across at the next world congress without thoroughly discussing it, without even clearly formulating it, without dropping the evasive language of the European perspectives document?

They could not make a worse mistake. The fate of the sections in Europe and of the Fourth International itself is involved. The gravity of the issue means that those who see the implications will fight with all their energy against such an outcome.

The New Stage in the Discussion

Comrade Germain considers that the rejection of the European perspectives document by a minority of the members of the International Executive Committee "opened a new stage in the international discussion." The Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency takes a different view. The new stage was opened by the refusal of the majority of the members of the IEC to learn from the lessons of the debacles suffered by the Argentine and Bolivian sections as a consequence of the guerrilla orientation adopted at the Ninth World Congress. This was the point of qualitative change.

From the point of view of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency, the European perspectives document is not qualitatively different from the Latin American resolution passed at the last world congress. It is merely more of the same—another product of the same method used in arriving at the guerrilla orientation for Latin America.

As Comrade Germain sees it, the projection of perspectives for

Europe and Latin America, and along with them the corresponding tactics, are isolated from each other. They belong in separate pigeonholes. Consequently, he concludes that it was a very grave thing for the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency to draw back from the document on Europe. As the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency sees it, the political and tactical lines projected for Latin America and for Europe are interrelated. Methodology locks them together. The errors in the one instance appear in a symmetrical way in the other.

The correctness of this dialectical view received rather striking confirmation at the convention of the LSA/LSO in Toronto last April. The adherents of the IEC Majority Tendency insisted not only on the correctness of the European perspectives document, they proclaimed the applicability of its method to the Canadian scene.

They were simply being consistent. They correctly grasped that out of the well from which came the guerrilla orientation for Latin America and the "winning hegemony within the mass vanguard" for Europe, similar brimming buckets can be drawn for other parts of the world.

The American followers of the IEC Majority Tendency are equally consistent. In their counterresolution presented for consideration at the August 1973 convention of the SWP, they affirm: "This document presents an alternative approach, a counterline. It is based on the method of the 'Theses on the Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe,' with which we have stated our agreement."¹¹⁷

The method referred to is the method that produced the Ninth World Congress orientation that led to disaster for two sections in Latin America.

It can be argued, of course, that just because the minority at the last world congress proved to be right in its forecast of the consequences to be expected from the majority's orientation in Latin America, that does not necessarily make it right with regard to the majority's new orientation for Europe. Trotsky, for instance, was wrong on party building in his polemic with Lenin in the early days of Bolshevism, but that did not make him wrong on the theory of permanent revolution.¹¹⁸ There Trotsky was completely right.

The argument, one can concede, is a strong one. It is probably the strongest one currently being circulated by the IEC Majority Tendency among the rank and file in Europe. Touch it, however, and it falls apart.

The fact that the majority was *wrong* on Latin America and must be held responsible for an orientation that ruined two sections there does not necessarily make them right on Europe. In fact, the use of the same method in deriving an orientation for Europe gives us every reason to expect comparable results.

As for the analogy with Lenin and Trotsky, consider the following: What was the nature of Trotsky's error? He was correct in his long-range projection of the pattern of the Russian revolution (and its extension); that is, he was correct on a broad theoretical level. But he was wrong on the level of practice; that is, on constructing the instrument required to realize the theoretical projection. In short, a dangerous gap existed between his theory and his practice.

The inadequacy of Lenin's theory was also dangerous. It led to a crisis in the Bolshevik Party at a crucial moment. Fortunately, perceiving the necessity to adjust his theory, Lenin was able to overcome the party crisis in time. And Trotsky, making his own self-criticism, recognized the need for the kind of party Lenin had built. Thus the gap between theory and practice was closed in two exemplary actions.

If the analogy has any relevancy in the present discussion, perhaps it is Trotsky's error and the example he set in correcting it that deserve closest study by the comrades who have dug up this item from the history books.

The Question of International Leadership

Comrade Germain ends his contribution with an appeal on the need to build an international leadership. He means by this, he explains,

a collective day-to-day international leadership, working as a political team, trying to *integrate* at the highest level of consciousness which our movement is today capable of reaching . . . the constantly changing and varying experiences in intervention in the class struggle and in party building on a world scale.¹¹⁹

He says further:

What we call for is not the long-term "uprooting" of nationally leading cadres of the movement. Experience has shown the dangers of such an uprooting. In addition, it would lead to a nucleus of a world leadership much too small to tackle the tremendous job which must be fulfilled today. Rather what we have in mind is a rotation system in which the

strongest sections of the movement and the most qualified leading cadres participate 3-4 years in the international leadership, living and working together in the same town, and forming a daily leadership team of the world movement. The movement has today the resources to make this solution possible.¹²⁰

It should be added that on this question, prominent members of the IEC Majority Tendency have been contending that the SWP leadership has a "federalist" concept. It has also been contended that to counter this concept, the statutes of the Fourth International should be modified so as to permit greater centralization and give the proposed international leadership team punitive powers and especially the power to intervene in the internal life of the sections.

Further discussion is required on this very important question, which involves the crisis in leadership the Fourth International is now undergoing. It is directly related to the central issue in the discussion—party building—and through that to the key crisis faced by the proletariat, its crisis of leadership. I will touch on only a few points here.

The general concept of a team of international leaders who could meet on a day-to-day basis has much to commend it. The opinion that such a team could constitute *the* international leadership of the Fourth International is nevertheless unrealistic, as I see it. The actual leadership, as it has existed since the founding of our movement, has been exercised by those engaged in battle on the national fronts: that is, the leaderships of the sections, working in collaboration with the few comrades they have been able to maintain at an international center. Resources to achieve much more than that have not existed and still do not exist.

Over the years, the SWP has favored recognizing this reality. This is the source of the unfounded accusation that it has a "federalist" concept.

The attempts up to now to set up a more powerful center have encountered insuperable difficulties. Lack of finances and repressive measures directed against the Fourth International are only part of the problem. The lack of revolutionary experience of the "team" is much more crucial. The pretension that a small combination of cadres can "run" the Fourth International from a town in which they live together is loaded with dangers. It is sufficient to recall the unfortunate experiences under Pablo and some of his lieutenants (including at least one American).

At the bottom of the differences that exist on this question are two concepts that are related to other differences under discussion at present in the Fourth International. One concept is that of a central group living in one town that not only works on broad analyses, on drawing together the main lessons of experiences in various parts of the world, but on overseeing the sections, particularly the application of tactics laid down for entire continents.

In fact, since there is more often agreement than disagreement on the broad analyses, those placed in charge of this or that continent, or group of countries, become "troubleshooters" on the application of tactical lines. They may be incapable of organizing or holding together so much as a branch or cell in their own countries; but they do not hesitate to get off a plane and throw the weight of the international center into complex problems that the Comintern itself in the days of Lenin and Trotsky would have handled with the greatest caution and tact. One of the worst effects this can have is on the development of national leaderships.

Against this concept is the view held by the SWP, among others, that as much as possible should be done to strengthen the center but that there should be no illusions about the limitations *under present circumstances*. The central team should concentrate on broad analyses, on assembling and circulating information, on taking up political questions within the framework of congress decisions. In relation to the sections, the efforts of the team—as part of the actual working leadership on an international scale—should be directed toward helping in the development of national leaderships. While no absolutes can be laid down, in general the central team should not try to "run" the International or intervene in the internal life of sections.

Recognition of the current limitations faced by the Fourth International does not alter our adherence to the principle of democratic centralism. It means simply placing the emphasis on upholding the program of the Fourth International and its political decisions and eschewing organizational intervention and crackdowns in the sections. This was the way it was when Trotsky was alive. In those days the binding cement in our movement was political agreement, loyalty to principles, comradesly collaboration, and good will. If these are absent, appeals to "democratic centralism," or warnings about punitive measures, will not hold the movement together; they will only end up

proving how inappropriate and flimsy such an approach is, and how damaging it can be to the International.

The discussion over strengthening the center, over setting up a stronger team there, has several other aspects that should not be overlooked. What is its relationship to the current crisis in the leadership? Under the guise of strengthening the center is it imagined that this crisis can be resolved by shifts of personnel, by having a small team of leaders living and working in one town? To carry on successful work, the team would have to be quite homogeneous in its views. How is this to be achieved without clarification and resolution of the issues that have led to the present situation? Without that prerequisite, the team would be divided from the beginning. It is clear that construction of an effective team hinges, like everything else involving the leadership question in our movement, on successfully resolving the internal political crisis in the Fourth International. This is the real problem that must be tackled.

Comrade Germain ends his contribution with an eloquent plea for unity. There is no doubt that centrifugal tendencies have appeared, as he points out. This is evidenced by the series of splits in sections or sympathizing groups going as far back as 1968 (in Argentina). The Fourth International as a whole is best served by doing everything possible to restrain those who prefer to walk out or to push the other side out rather than to continue the discussion. It must be recognized that it is not always possible to succeed in this, the latest example being the few who split from the Canadian section after a completely democratic discussion and congress.

Both tendencies, however, have a common interest in exerting every effort to maintain the unity of the Fourth International. Aside from seeking to avoid, or to remove, the small irritations that can arise in a warm polemic, both sides should do their utmost to advance projects and actions where collaboration is possible with a minimum of friction. Defense work, solidarity actions, common publication projects are good examples.

The interest both sides have in avoiding a split should make it easier to conduct a fully democratic discussion, the main requisite for safeguarding the unity of the movement in face of differences as serious as those we now confront.

Armed Struggle in Latin America

To properly judge the resolution that has been placed before the congress, and in particular the arguments made by Comrade Roman, the reporter for the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, who went beyond Latin America—citing events elsewhere in the world—to bolster his arguments on the “programmatic clarification” offered by the resolution, it is necessary to consider the document in relation to the position on this question held by the Fourth International since it was founded in 1938.¹

The fundamental position of the Fourth International on armed struggle proceeds from the view that the socialist revolution, unlike all previous revolutions, is a conscious action carried out by the masses—by the masses in their millions and tens of millions—under the leadership of the proletariat. This sounds simple; and it is simple—but it is also very profound. It constitutes the basic frame of revolutionary Marxist politics, distinguishing us from all other tendencies in the radical movement. We proceed from this view in trying to solve the key problem that faces us as revolutionary Marxists today: how to bring the program of socialism to the masses so that they adopt it as their own program and set out themselves to realize it in life.

The Fourth World Congress of the Fourth International Since Reunification (Tenth World Congress) was held in February 1974. This minority report on armed struggle in Latin America was given by Joseph Hansen on behalf of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTF), which had been formed at a meeting in Toronto, Canada, August 13-16, 1973. Hansen's counterreport was first published in *Internal Information Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), no. 8, August 1974. The vote on this report at the world congress was 118 for, 143 against, 6 abstentions, and 3 not voting.

This is very clearly shown by the way Trotsky, in his final programmatic statement on the question of armed struggle, handles the subject in the Transitional Program.

He begins with mass actions; in this instance with a wave of sit-down strikes and occupations of factories. That is the proper way to begin from the Marxist point of view. Then he proceeds to the probable response by the bourgeoisie—the use of violence. This in turn impels the workers to act in self-defense.

Measures of self-defense, worked out by the masses and put into effect by the masses, sharpen the class struggle, as Trotsky outlines the likely course of events. The bourgeoisie, as has been seen in many a bitter strike struggle, resorts to the use of armed thugs, to private armies, in addition to the ordinary use of the police and army. As the struggle sharpens, the bourgeoisie inclines more and more toward a fascist take-over. Or, if you wish to look at it in the context of many areas today, including Latin America, the bourgeoisie inclines toward a military coup and the establishment of a repressive military regime.

And so to defend themselves in the most powerful way open to them, the masses mobilize in their millions. Their self-defensive measures—as Trotsky continues the logical sequence—become broader, sharper, and increasingly effective through the organization of armed workers' detachments. This involves, as Trotsky stresses, tens of millions of toilers. In dealing with armed struggle, Trotsky always speaks in terms of the masses—of the vast majority of the population. The battle begins in the plants, Trotsky says—in the plants where the workers are. It ends with the masses flooding the streets as the contending class forces confront each other in mounting clashes.

The nuclei in this area of the class struggle consist of strike pickets. That's the point of departure. For the workers, self-defense begins with pickets. These develop at a later stage, as Trotsky visualized the sequence, into a workers' militia.

Trotsky emphasizes, moreover, that as the struggle proceeds, the advances always occur on the basis of the experience of the masses themselves. He is simply stating the most elementary proposition of Marxist politics. Our politics is the politics of the mass movement, of mass struggles.

Here is Trotsky's summary on the question of armed struggle:

Engels defined the state as bodies of "armed men." *The arming of the proletariat* is an imperative concomitant element to its struggle for liberation. When the proletariat wills it, it will find the road and the

means to arming. In this field, also, the leadership falls naturally to the sections of the Fourth International.²

What is the essence of this position, of this revolutionary Marxist political position? It is the mobilization and organization of tens of millions of people. The concept is one of immense boldness—a perspective of organizing the masses by the millions. Considering the small forces that we start with, what perspective could be bolder than that?

By what strategy is this aim to be achieved? It is through the construction of a mass revolutionary party, an instrument interlocked with the masses and thereby in position to provide them with leadership at each stage of the struggle.

Consider more closely Trotsky's sentence on how the proletariat is to be armed. This is Trotsky speaking: "When the proletariat wills it, it will find the road and the means to arming."

Does this mean that Trotsky was a *spontanéist*? Few today would call Trotsky a *spontanéist*. In 1938 that position was called having confidence in the initiative of the masses. Initiatives in action, if you please.

Trotsky was not an *advocate* of violence. He said more than once that it would be preferable to avoid violence. He pointed out, however, that the decision on this question rested with the bourgeoisie, and that history teaches us that the bourgeoisie will resort to minority violence if they believe their rule to be seriously endangered. The majority then has no choice but to defend itself against the violence of the small minority hanging on to power against the will of the people.

Trotsky insisted on the importance of the distinction between majority and minority. In the case of the Civil War in the United States and again in Spain, it was the reactionary minority that resorted to violence in hope of frustrating the will of the majority. The majority had no choice but to respond in kind.

Trotsky's rejection of a course that would have involved our movement in the use of "minority violence" cannot be ascribed to pacifism, tail-endism, or right opportunism on his part. In the last years of his life, as is well known, he was greatly concerned about the mounting threat from native fascism in the United States itself. Against that threat, Trotsky counseled his followers in the United States to use their influence to help the trade unions and other mass organizations initiate the organization of workers' defense guards.

What Trotsky said on this question in the last years of his life

is especially important. He was voicing his considered judgment based on the entire experience of the revolutionary movement, including what he had learned in the Russian revolution and in the struggle against the rise of fascism in Europe. In the Transitional Program he condensed the valid positions of the first four congresses of the Communist International. Besides that, Trotsky left us rich observations on this question in his *History of the Russian Revolution*.

What is the conclusion of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction on this point?³ Briefly, that there is no need for a new resolution on armed struggle. We already have a rounded programmatic position on armed struggle. What we leave open is its tactical application. That has to be determined by the concrete circumstances at a given moment in the class struggle. If any resolution is required it ought to be one reaffirming the Trotskyist position against the challenge offered by the new rise of individual terrorism in many countries.

The resolution of the IEC Majority Tendency does the opposite. It revises the Trotskyist position. It reaffirms the guerrilla orientation adopted at the 1969 congress. At the same time it seeks to make that orientation more palatable. It could be said to mark the completion of the turn adopted by the majority at the last world congress. The resolution reduces guerrilla warfare to but one form of "armed struggle," or, looked at from another angle, it generalizes guerrilla war. Instead of a particular form we have been presented with the general form.

What is referred to in the resolution, it must be emphasized, is not armed struggle as initiated and carried out by the majority of the population, but violent actions initiated and carried out by small groups. Such actions are supposed to serve as examples to the masses. And this is obviously how the term "armed struggle" will be understood by every guerrilla fighter, every practitioner of "minority violence" in the world.

Some of the flaws in the resolution, as it stands, should be noted. In the very first sentence a contradiction appears:

For a number of reasons that were spelled out in the resolution on Latin America at the Ninth World Congress and that are particular to that continent at this stage, any turbulent rise of the mass movement must soon confront a resolute attempt by the army to crush it and to establish a military dictatorship.⁴

According to that, "armed struggle" is confined to the conti-

nent of Latin America. Yet the stated conditions hold generally for all continents. They hold even for industrially advanced countries. It can be safely predicted that any turbulent rise of the mass movement anywhere in the world today faces the danger of "a resolute attempt by the army to crush it and to establish a military dictatorship."

That was the experience in Indonesia, which is hardly part of Latin America. Wasn't a turbulent rise of the mass movement there met with the establishment of a ferocious military dictatorship?

If it is true that the bourgeoisie will grant concessions in face of small mobilizations, as the resolution states elsewhere, but will seek to smash big mobilizations, doesn't that hold for Western Europe and for the United States? Consequently, even though we consider his conclusions to be wrong, it was correct of Comrade Roman to consider the question on a world scale and not merely in reference to Latin America.

In fact it would appear that the references in the resolution to Latin America represent nothing but bits of the shell in which the new orientation on "armed struggle," or guerrilla war, was presented at the last world congress.

There are other flaws. The resolution singles out "armed struggle" as an entity existing in its own right, a phenomenon to be considered by itself. Abstracting the question in this way shows that the authors of the resolution have isolated it from the struggle of the masses.

Further proof, if proof is needed, is the emphasis on the action of miniscule groups. In reality that is all the resolution deals with—the action of miniscule groups isolated from the masses.

Along with this goes unrealistic schematization, an abstract set of rules as to when and where "armed struggle" is to be used, in what forms the miniscule groups should apply it—that is, whether as guerrilla war, as armed detachments of the party, as initial pilot projects, etc.

The fatal flaw in this approach is that the concrete reality is always richer than the best-laid schema. Concrete reality always proves to be richer than it can be imagined in advance. Thus the tactical prescriptions advanced in this resolution can prove to be deadly traps.

Our movement has had some bad experiences in this respect. Wasn't that one of the reasons why the sections of the Fourth International in both Bolivia and Argentina followed courses out

of consonance with reality, thereby suffering serious setbacks?

This is not all. The resolution offers a caricature of the position outlined in the Transitional Program. Then it *combines* this caricature with the Transitional Program.

What this means in practice is shown by what the Bolivian comrades told us happened in Bolivia. They succeeded in getting important union bodies there to vote for the Transitional Program. Then they discovered that this was not enough because later on they still had to confront the problem of "armed struggle." So they "attached" armed struggle to the Transitional Program.

The most important aspect of the Transitional Program, however, is the method it offers—a method to be used by the revolutionary party in advancing the class struggle. This method applies to all aspects of the class struggle, including the periods in which the masses resort to arms in self-defense against the attacks of the bourgeoisie. The point is that revolutionists should master this method so that they can utilize it in concrete situations no matter how unexpected these situations may be in their actual form. To have unions *vote* for the Transitional Program can be meaningless, if not worse.

The Bolivian comrades believed, of course, that they had carried out their duty and had scored a success in getting powerful unions to vote for it. After this success they turned to other tasks. And what happened? They were left defenseless before the pressure of Castroism.

The resolution submitted by the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency follows essentially the same course. The majority comrades emphasize that they are all for the Transitional Program; but they propose to combine something with it that goes directly against Trotsky's basic concept of armed struggle as arising from within the mass movement itself.

On the theoretical level such an attempt represents an absolute collapse of serious thought.

The orientation on rural guerrilla war adopted at the last world congress reflected the pressure of Castroism on our movement. In some circles of what the majority calls the "new mass vanguard," it is thought that the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cuban revolutions were touched off by small groups through pedagogical armed actions.

If you believe that this model is valid for the coming revolutions, then the majority resolution follows logically. But it is the

logic of Castroism—a quite obsolete logic, it ought to be added. The fact is that this model is far removed from the real course of those revolutions.

On top of that, the revolutionary upsurge developing internationally today is more and more approximating the model of the Russian revolution.

Castroism has been ebbing for some time. How then are we to explain the pressure within the Fourth International for continuing the guerrilla orientation, the pressure for deepening it, for generalizing it, for experimenting with new variants of it? The explanation remains the same as the one offered by the minority at the 1969 congress. The fact is that the memory of the impact of the Russian revolution, of its pattern, of the methods used by its leaders and what a mighty role can be played by a Bolshevik-type party has grown dim. It remains a living concept only among the older generations, along with young comrades who are really willing to study it in depth and to transport themselves in mind to that titanic event.

Many youths have come into the Fourth International under the influence of the Cuban, Chinese, and the Vietnamese revolutions. They have not yet outgrown that influence. At best the Russian revolution is to them one among other revolutions, one model among others, and they have not yet grasped its central political lesson.

And sadly enough, some of the older leaders of the Fourth International, rather than seeking to overcome the ultraleft bias of these new recruits, bent to the pressure. As in the way they handled the non-Trotskyist PRT in Argentina, these leaders drifted. Still worse, they pampered the ultraleft prejudices of these recruits. These are the main sources of the pressures within the Fourth International that have led to the continuation, deepening, and generalization of the “armed struggle,” or guerrilla, line as codified in this resolution which is now before us.

We come to another very important point. The resolution on “armed struggle” opens the way to all kinds of deviations of the most dangerous kind. For example, the leaders of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency may contend that it has no connection with their position on armed struggle in Latin America, yet members of their tendency in Spain hailed the assassination of Carrero Blanco, and the *Red Weekly* of January 11, 1974, published a headline: “Spanish Trotskyists give total support to Carrero Blanco assassination.”⁵ Naturally, no Trotskyists were involved in that assassination. The declarations of

support, however, involved the most serious departure from the *programmatic* position of the world Trotskyist movement on armed struggle.

I said that this resolution marks the completion of the turn adopted at the Ninth World Congress, the turn toward guerrilla war. This is not quite accurate. It can also be said to have opened a new stage. If adopted, it would place the Fourth International in a rather ignominious position—standing on the sidelines hailing the “minority violence” committed by others. Could this position be maintained for long? I don’t think so. The pressure would mount to go still further in departing from the programmatic position of Trotskyism on this question. I hope that the comrades will draw back from this road before it is too late. If they do not, our movement will face the most disastrous consequences. To turn resolutely away from this fatal perspective, the resolution on armed struggle must be defeated.

Report on the 1974 World Congress of the Fourth International

I have been asked to present a balance sheet of the Fourth World Congress of the Fourth International Since Reunification (Tenth World Congress) from the viewpoint of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. Some of the conclusions I will offer are subject to modification after we have had an opportunity to study the final versions of the documents presented at the congress by the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency. These were adopted by a majority of delegates but were subject to amendment and to editing, and are not yet available.

On arrangements at the congress there was a considerable improvement over the congress held in 1969. The facilities were better in general. For the first time the problem of translations was met in an adequate way. With the up-to-date equipment that was used, it was possible to have simultaneous translations in three languages—Spanish, French, and English. The time for discussion was thus utilized much more efficiently than at any previous congress.

The congress was the largest yet held by the Fourth International. Delegates and observers were present from all continents and all the major countries except the Soviet bloc.¹

In addition to delegates elected by official sections of the Fourth International, the congress was open to observers from sympathizing organizations—like the Socialist Workers Party—which are prevented by reactionary legislation in their own

This report was given to a meeting of the New York caucus of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction on March 12, 1974. It was first published in *Internal Information Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), no. 4, April 1974.

countries from affiliating to the International. Such observers were invited to express their views on all disputed political questions.

The discussion, which was quite intensive, centered on issues of the greatest importance to the future of the world Trotskyist movement. Some of the differences were sharp and deepgoing.

To understand the congress, its limitations, and its outcome, it is necessary to bear in mind the context in which it was held. The context was a crisis in the orientation and leadership of the Fourth International.

The general outline of the development of this crisis can be indicated by noting the key points in the deepening internal differentiation.

The differences can be pegged roughly as having originated in the adoption by the Ninth World Congress of a "turn" that included an orientation toward "rural guerrilla warfare." A minority at that congress voiced strong opposition to the new orientation, predicting that the "turn" could do serious damage to the Fourth International, and that if it were persisted in, it would spread beyond Latin America and begin to impinge on the basic principles of our movement.

The debate on this question was resumed about a year after the Ninth World Congress. Already it was possible to draw certain conclusions from the test of events, and these were made more emphatic by further developments, including the desertion of the PRT (*Combatiente*), the official Argentine section of the Fourth International.²

The crisis in orientation and leadership of the Fourth International was precipitated by the failure of those responsible for the adoption of the orientation toward rural guerrilla warfare, and later urban guerrilla warfare, to recognize the lessons of the events in Bolivia and Argentina. This was shown by the documents they wrote going to great lengths in the effort to justify their course, and by the extension of their erroneous line in a modified form to other areas ("The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe").³ Their insistence on their mistaken course was formalized in the positions they upheld at the plenum of the International Executive Committee in December 1972.

The IEC plenum was followed by a sharpening clash over how to resolve the crisis.

The minority sought to reverse the guerrilla war orientation. It sought to gain adequate time for the ranks of the International to

discuss the issues. Time was required for the presentation of documents, their translation and distribution, and clarification of the differences through debate. To this end the minority urged postponement of the congress. And at the IEC plenum it called for organization of a tendency to advance this point of view.

The majority sought an early congress. It talked about imposing stronger centralism in the International, a position that aroused fears that if it gained a majority it would attempt to resolve the differences through organizational means. It was reluctant about agreeing to postpone the congress, considering this to be an organizational concession to the minority instead of a genuine need of the world Trotskyist movement as a whole if clarification were to be reached among the ranks on the differences. At the IEC plenum itself, the majority announced the formation of a tendency to defend its positions, naming it the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency.

At a conference held in Santiago, Chile, March 5-8, 1973, some of the leading comrades in the world Trotskyist movement who agreed with the minority position formed the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency on a principled platform stating the basis of membership.

Later it was discovered that the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency was in actuality functioning as a secret faction; that is, on an undeclared basis. It was discovered, in addition, that some of its leaders favored working toward a split in the Fourth International.⁴

In face of this evidence, the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency modified its platform somewhat, adding a call for a change in the leadership of the Fourth International and announcing that it was converting to an international faction and assuming the rights of such a formation, with the consequent change in functioning that this involved.

As the internal struggle continued to sharpen and to broaden in its ramifications, leaders of both sides recognized the danger of a split that would be politically unjustified.

The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction was particularly concerned over the delays in translating documents into languages other than English, the delay in providing French translations being particularly bad. This signified that the congress would not be well enough prepared to settle the key issues in accordance with Trotskyist norms. In addition, the existence of a wing in the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency favoring splitting the movement was ominous. It remained to be seen

whether those in the undeclared faction opposed to a split could keep them under control.

Yet the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency insisted on holding the congress without further postponements. They cited the statutes requiring a congress at least every three years; and on this they of course had a point.

The outcome of this situation was the unanimously accepted ten-point agreement of September 19, 1973.⁵ This limited the agenda to five points: (1) the world political situation; (2) the question of orientation in Argentina; (3) the question of orientation in Bolivia; (4) European perspectives; (5) statutes of the Fourth International. Other points of the agreement included refraining from expulsions or suspensions or application of disciplinary measures against sections or sympathizing groups; assurances on voting rights; and adoption of the temporary statutes without change. It reaffirmed the commitment to translate and circulate all contributions to the *International Internal Discussion Bulletin* in at least French, Spanish, and English.

Another important item was to hold over for further discussion the following questions: (1) the Cultural Revolution and China; (2) the radicalization of the youth; (3) women's liberation; (4) the Middle East; (5) Vietnam. It was agreed to publish a monthly internal bulletin of up to forty-eight pages for articles on these subjects.

It was also agreed that the next congress would be held within two years.

In face of the deepening and widening differences in the movement as a whole, the ten-point agreement outlined a possible *modus vivendi* until the next congress. However, it remained to be seen what would happen at the congress itself.

A New Point Added to the Agenda

The actual agenda turned out to be somewhat different from what had been agreed on in September. In particular, a point called "Armed Struggle in Latin America" was included—I will come later to the reason for this—so that the actual order was as follows: (1) world political situation; (2) orientation in Bolivia; (3) orientation in Argentina; (4) armed struggle in Latin America; (5) European perspectives; (6) statutes.

Since the resolutions themselves and the reports on them should soon be available for everyone in the Trotskyist movement to read and study, I will not attempt to go into them in detail or

even to outline them. For purposes of a tentative balance sheet, I will try to give the gist of the positions. To do this as clearly as possible, I will put them in a certain logical order—which is not the same as the actual order.

First, the positions of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency:

On the world political situation, they held that there has been a revolutionary upsurge since 1968. The outstanding manifestation of this has been the rise of a “new mass vanguard.” They cited Europe as the prime example of these developments, but maintained that similar phenomena are observable elsewhere in the world.

From this they drew the conclusion that the major task facing the Fourth International is to influence and win this new mass vanguard; and that the most effective way of achieving this is through a policy of “initiatives in action.”

Comrade Ernest Germain, the reporter for the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, summarized it as follows: “The problem of initiatives in action is at the center of the debate in the International.”

On “Armed Struggle in Latin America,” the reporter for the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, Comrade Roman, made some sweeping generalizations which I will return to later. The resolution falls in place here because it amounts to a generalization of the problem of initiatives in action, of “minority violence,” and of “injecting violence into the class struggle.”

It includes criticisms of particular formulations made at the Ninth World Congress in relation to the “turn” adopted then, but these are secondary.

The reporter theorized on the question of “armed struggle,” viewing the question from the angle of “initiatives” that might be taken by small groups, whatever the eventual link might be between such actions and those of the masses in motion in prerevolutionary or revolutionary situations.

On the question of perspectives in Europe, the reporter on this point, Comrade Livio Maitan, handled it as a particular application of the position taken by the majority on the political situation in the world as a whole.

Similarly on the question of the events in Bolivia, the reporter, Comrade Serrano, viewed this as a particular application of “armed struggle,” maintaining that the orientation adopted at the Ninth World Congress was completely correct as a whole. Whatever criticisms could be lodged fell within the framework of

application of the line. In this respect there had been some wrong estimates of the relationship of forces, and some tactical errors had been committed.

Argentina was dealt with in the same way. Comrade Saoul reported that what had occurred in Argentina was an application of the "armed struggle" orientation. The line still remained valid despite the experience with the PRT (*Combatiente*). The main error in Argentina had been a "militarist deviation." The speakers defending the position of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency made some self-criticisms for having delayed so long in taking up the deviations of the PRT, but said nothing about having presented the PRT (*Combatiente*) as a model section, particularly in the way it had carried out the proguerrilla line of the Ninth World Congress.

As for the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, its main positions on these questions should be presented in a quite different order, inasmuch as its objective was to put up the strongest possible case for reversing a wrong orientation.

On both Bolivia and Argentina, the reporters for the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, Comrades Lorenzo and Arturo respectively, started from the concrete situations in those countries and the actual experience of our comrades there. This included a résumé of the contrasting results of the application of two different lines in Argentina; that is, the disaster suffered by the Fourth International in the case of the PRT (*Combatiente*) and the successes gained for the Fourth International by the PST.

Likewise on the question of perspectives in Europe, Comrade Roberto, who was the reporter for the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction on that subject, besides offering a theoretical analysis, emphasized the concrete experience of the past few years, especially in Spain, where the Trotskyist movement has made big strides.

On "Armed Struggle in Latin America," as the comrade explaining the views of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, I pointed out how the guerrilla orientation had now been generalized in such a way as to become a line for all continents, as had been predicted by the minority at the Ninth World Congress. I showed how the resolution contradicted the positions held by the Trotskyist movement since its foundation, and warned of the disasters that could be expected from revising the program of Trotskyism on this question.

Finally, on the world political situation, Comrade Jack Barnes, explaining the views of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, offered a broad analysis of the objective reality for the past few decades.⁶

The purpose of this was to call special attention to the changing pattern of the world revolution, which was now bringing to the fore the leading role of the working class, including in the imperialist centers, and opening up immense new opportunities for the world Trotskyist movement. In taking up the tasks facing the Fourth International, he called for a realistic assessment of the stage of development of the Fourth International and particularly of the resources at its disposal. If this were done, then the world Trotskyist movement had every reason to count on highly encouraging advances in the coming period.

In general, what the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction sought to do at the congress was the following:

1. Clarify the issues, particularly the meaning of the resolution on "armed struggle" placed on the agenda by the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency.
2. Block the would-be splitters, those who were counting on the congress ending in a blowup.
3. Maintain the unity of the Fourth International despite the development of some very deep differences.
4. Prepare the best possible conditions for the next stage, in which our movement can expect big openings in the class struggle in various areas.

A third tendency participated actively in the debate that took place at the world congress. It was announced at the beginning of the sessions. It called itself the Mezhrayonka Tendency.⁷

In its announcement, it said that it was formed to gain equal rights in the discussion and to fight against any split. Its platform consisted of documents advanced for the most part by the Kompass Tendency and a lengthy critique of the IEC Majority Tendency's political resolution, which was distributed in French at the world congress itself.⁸

The components of the Mezhrayonka Tendency consisted of the Kompass Tendency in the German section; the Kompass Tendency in the Danish section; the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency in the Italian section; Comrade Krasno, a member of the steering committee of the Contre le Courant Tendency in France; and Comrade Kailas Chandra, a leading member of the Indian section.⁹

The Mezhrayonka Tendency played a progressive, if brief, role at the congress, dissolving itself after the vote was taken.

On the world political situation, Comrade Luigi of the Mezhrayonka Tendency gave a counterreport based on their document.

It was highly critical of the positions of the International Executive Committee Majority Report.

On "Armed Struggle in Latin America" the report by Comrade Willi was likewise highly critical, coming close to the position of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction except on the question of forming an "armed wing" of the party. This flaw made the position of the Mezhrayonka Tendency unacceptable to the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction.

On European perspectives, the reporter for the Mezhrayonka Tendency was Comrade Herb, whose position was likewise critical of the resolution of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, particularly its concept of a new mass vanguard, which he held to be amorphous and open to all kinds of interpretations.

On Bolivia and Argentina, the Mezhrayonka Tendency agreed with the general line of the balance sheet submitted by the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction and did not ask for separate reporters on those two points.

In announcing that it was dissolving, the Mezhrayonka Tendency said that this did not affect its components. These would be maintained on a national basis and would correspond and collaborate with each other in the coming period.

Significance of the Outcome

The International Executive Committee Majority Tendency carried the vote on its resolutions, although by a narrower margin than at the Ninth World Congress. For example, on Bolivia and Argentina 51 percent of the delegates voted for the IEC Majority Tendency's resolutions, 46 percent for the balance sheet of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, and 3 percent abstained.

What is the significance for the Fourth International of this outcome?

It means, in brief, that in face of vigorous and increasing opposition, the ultraleft course on which the International was placed at the Ninth World Congress will be continued until at least the next congress.

First of all, the vote meant affirmation of the "turn" of the Ninth World Congress along with rectification of what have been called "unfortunate" or "elliptical" formulations, plus some criticisms of what have been put down as "tactical mistakes" and "wrong estimation of the relationship of forces," and some self-

reproof for having failed in time to criticize the tactical errors and political deviations of the now admittedly "non-Trotskyist" former official section in Argentina.

Secondly, the vote meant generalization of the "turn" taken at the Ninth World Congress. The generalization has been codified in the resolution on "armed struggle in Latin America" and the accompanying report. It could be said that the "turn" has now been virtually completed. It goes far beyond Latin America. It includes adoption of a policy favoring "minority violence."

The adoption of this line means that a new stage in the history of the Fourth International has been opened. A key point of program—the position of the Fourth International opposing "minority violence" in both theory and practice—has been revised.

In conformity with this change, the axis of work has been officially shifted toward a supposed "new mass vanguard." That means—above all in Europe—away from the masses who are organized in the Communist and Social Democratic parties and in the trade unions. Of first concern now are the interests of the "new mass vanguard," or more correctly what the "new mass vanguard" is interested in. The orientation is toward small demonstrations of a "spectacular" nature—"initiatives in action" and "exemplary" deeds.

In this orientation, the one saving point—if it can be called that—is that it includes work among the radicalizing youth, especially in the high schools and universities. But the basis of the approach is a disorienting one that stands in the road of the key task facing our movement, becoming integrated and rooted in the working class.

Lest anyone draw hasty and unwarranted conclusions, the adoption of the new line on "armed struggle" should not be taken as signifying that the Fourth International is beyond reform. It is a situation conducive to sharp internal differentiation and struggle; but so long as democratic centralism is observed and no ban is placed on the organization of tendencies or factions, the Fourth International can be brought back to the correct course on this issue.

In fact, the maintenance of unity at the congress and the organizational conditions that were agreed to at the end of the sessions make it possible to test the line further, to review its results during the preparations for the next congress, and in all likelihood to reverse it at that time.

It should be said, however, that strong centrifugal forces were

observable at the congress. It must be said, too, that while the immediate danger of a split was averted and an agreement was reached on measures to help maintain unity following the congress, unity remains precarious. Recognition of this reality facilitates the struggle against a split that would be quite unjustified politically.

The unity of the Fourth International remains precarious because of the nature of the resolution on "armed struggle." It involves the public stand to be taken on current events of an acute political nature.

Unlike broad theoretical questions that can be discussed in a leisurely way within the movement, events involving the use of violence in the class struggle require taking public positions—and without delay.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the mounting unrest observable throughout the world today has been the recrudescence of primitive and outmoded forms of struggle such as individual terrorism. This is highly symptomatic, signaling the approach of more effective forms of struggle. In anticipation of the great mass actions to come, it is absolutely essential for our movement to take clear public positions on events of this kind that gain wide notoriety. The issue cannot be evaded. To attempt to evade taking a correct public stand would mean political death for our movement.

Thus a heavy responsibility rests on the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency. If they resolve the contradiction between their newly adopted position on "armed struggle" and the classic Marxist position by completely junking the old Trotskyism, this could place the unity of the Fourth International in jeopardy.

The issue, of course, is not confined to an abstract level; it will take very concrete forms. The question depends on how each individual case is handled. Consequently it would be a mistake to attempt to forecast what the variations might be.

A Transitional Situation

The outcome of the congress, that is, the vote and the accompanying organizational agreement on measures to help maintain the unity of the Fourth International, was unsatisfactory to both sides. But it reflected a transitional situation in the world Trotskyist movement that still remains to be resolved. Most importantly, a split was prevented.

The centrifugal forces observable at the congress go back as far as 1968, when the Argentine section split wide open in a struggle involving adaptation to the strategy of rural guerrilla warfare. Since that time splits have occurred in other sections or groups.

The primary cause of the divisions was the influence of Castroism, Ho Chi Minhism, and ultimately Maoism on our movement, the intermediate link being the ultraleft currents that appeared as part of the process of the radicalization of the youth. This pressure, however, could become a major problem for our movement only because it was coupled with the failure of the leaders of the majority to oppose it effectively—in fact by their bending to it.

Another important element in the outcome at the congress was the lack of understanding among the ranks of the issues at stake. This was one of the consequences of the uneven development of the groups and sections of the Fourth International. Some of them are very new and very inexperienced. In addition, the discussion prior to the congress was quite uneven. In some areas the discussion had barely got under way because of the difficulties of translating and distributing documents.

An additional complication was the pace of recruitment. The world Trotskyist movement as a whole has made considerable gains in this respect in the past few years. In the feeling of satisfaction over the number recruited, it is easy to overlook the relative possibilities—what could have been gained—and to miss the meaning of the considerable recruiting that had been scored by competitive groupings during this same period. It is also easy to miss the significance of a high rate of turnover in membership. Consequently, one of the harsh tests of the validity of a line—its capacity to win members of the working-class vanguard and hold them—has not come prominently to the fore in this period.

The new recruits, of course, in the first stage of their life in the movement come heavily under the influence of the cadres who first brought them the message of revolutionary Marxism and who are not always above also indoctrinating them along factional lines.

In this transitional situation, the congress could not resolve the issues in a definitive way. A considerable part of the world Trotskyist movement still faces the task of catching up with a discussion that in some areas reached the point of temporary exhaustion.

This uneven situation was reflected in the voting pattern in a number of European sections on the eve of the world congress.

High rates of abstention indicated a justified refusal by many comrades to vote on questions they felt had not been adequately clarified.

The reports presented to the mandates commission at the congress confirmed the fact that neither the IEC Majority Tendency nor the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction have yet won a majority of the ranks of the International. While a few more comrades actually voted for the positions of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (5,663 as against 5,277 for the IEC Majority Tendency), the important fact is that neither tendency has yet convinced a majority of the members of the Fourth International.

Under these circumstances, to demand that the delegates at the congress make a decision on a far-reaching new line on "armed struggle" represented, in my opinion, a grave default in responsible leadership.

The Single Most Important Development

The adoption of the resolution "Armed Struggle in Latin America," which was submitted by the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, was the single most important development at the world congress.

First as to the circumstances of its inclusion on the agenda:

It was originally submitted to the discussion as a statement of position, being published in the English edition of the *International Internal Discussion Bulletin* in October 1973; that is, a month after the September agreement on the agenda of the congress.

Later, on the eve of the congress, the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency made a unilateral decision to include it on the agenda in the form of a resolution. This unilateral decision was, of course, in violation of the ten-point agreement defining the preconditions for an authoritative world congress.

Thus many sections and sympathizing groups were unaware that the statement was proposed for adoption as a resolution by the congress even if they had received it, translated it, and made it available for consideration by the membership in advance of the congress. The result was that it was debated in only a few countries. And it was not voted on in most countries as a basis for selection of delegates.

No final version was offered for discussion at the congress. Many extensive amendments were offered after the congress

opened and some of these were presented in an incomplete form.

This undemocratic procedure met with strong protests, particularly on the part of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. The procedure was clear evidence of the lack of adequate preparation for the congress. In view of the circumstances, it was highly in order for the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency to request postponement of the congress so as to provide time for discussion of their resolution on "armed struggle" and the selection of delegates on the basis of that resolution.

The leaders of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency had no adequate reasons to offer for not requesting postponement of the congress in view of their decision to place this question on the agenda. They maintained (1) that they had a "right" as a majority to do this; and (2) that, after all, the question of orientation on "armed struggle" had been one of the central issues in the internal discussion since 1969.

The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction decided in caucus to agree under protest to discuss the question of "armed struggle" as a separate point and to do the utmost in the limited time available to clarify the question. Against the objections of prominent members of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction succeeded in doubling the time for discussion of this point from four hours to eight.

The "Problématique" of "Armed Struggle"

The discussion on the resolution was quite revealing. The reporter for the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, Comrade Roman, said that the question arose for the Fourth International in the context of the economic, social, and political conditions in Latin America but that the *problématique* of "armed struggle" is not confined to Latin America. (The translators are still undecided on how to put the term *problématique* into good English. It appears to mean the technique of posing problems or the set of problems you succeed in getting into a single bag.) In the opinion of the reporter, the Trotskyist movement had not answered the questions posed by the *problématique* of "armed struggle" and it was high time that this was done.

To prove how far the subject extended beyond Latin America, the reporter placed great stress on the pattern of resistance in Spain to Franco's bid for power in 1936. And he sought to construct an analogy that could be applied in considering the

events in Chile when the military seized power there last fall.

In addition to that, the reporter sought to establish some general rules that the world Trotskyist movement could apply in situations involving urban uprisings on any of the continents. These rules included the following:

1. Advancing propaganda in favor of arming the working class. This, he maintained, was one of the themes of the Transitional Program; why shouldn't it be advanced like any of the other themes?

2. Carrying on work in the army. This meant not just seeking to democratize the army, or to defend the democratic rights of members of the armed forces, but to split off segments at the appropriate time and place in conjunction with "armed struggle" conducted by small civilian groups.

3. Intervention by the party through "armed struggle" under its own guidance both before and after a rightist coup such as the one seen in Chile.

4. Preparing well in advance for all technical and military contingencies. This did not mean opposition to mass action but it did mean opposition to any "pseudomassist" concepts such as those supposedly displayed by the PST in Argentina.

In addition to the above, the reporter stressed an alleged dialectical relationship between "minority violence" and "majority violence."

Perhaps the most significant item was the statement by the reporter that he was formulating only the first approach and that a lot still remains to be done in working out the *problématique* of "armed struggle."

He said he was all for the Transitional Program but the specific forms it outlines do not provide the answers for new situations.

He ended by promising to follow up this encouraging beginning with theoretical and practical work.

Frequent references to the assassination of Franco's prime minister, Carrero Blanco, by the Basque nationalists in December were made during the discussion.

A Spanish leader of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, for instance, reaffirmed the position that the assassination gave an "impulse" to the class struggle in Spain and caused a crisis in ruling circles. His defense of the assassination followed the classical lines of the terrorist position long ago analyzed and opposed by the revolutionary Marxist movement.

In showing how the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency had bent to the pressure, the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction pointed to a scandalous headline in the January 11, 1974, issue of *Red Weekly*, the paper of the International Marxist Group: "Spanish Trotskyists give total support to Carrero Blanco assassination."

Comrade Livio Maitan was perhaps the most consistent in advancing the new line. He argued that the headline of the *Red Weekly* was in error. The British comrades should not have said "total support"; they should have said "critical support to Carrero Blanco assassination."

Comrade Maitan offered his own version of the resolution on "armed struggle in Latin America," or some very extensive amendments—I am not sure which, nor am I sure of their full content inasmuch as page 2 of his four-and-a-half-page draft resolution was missing in the copy I received and a corrected copy was not readily available. Here are two revealing sentences from the pages of the copy I received. In explaining what the resolution on armed struggle passed by the Ninth World Congress was about, Comrade Maitan included the following:

That it was imperious for sections of the Fourth International, particularly in certain countries (Bolivia, Argentina)—where the threshold of a minimum accumulation of cadres had already been reached, not only to elaborate an orientation for armed struggle, but also to engage in the concrete implementation of such an orientation. Guerrilla warfare was considered the predominant form of armed struggle at this particular stage.

What is new in this is the statement that in Bolivia and Argentina a minimum accumulation of cadres had *already been reached*. Hitherto the "minimum accumulation" has remained algebraic. Now the arithmetic has been supplied. The number is astonishingly low.

Here is another proposal offered by Comrade Maitan:

We must reject any cursory characterization, which, under the disguise [guise?] of remaining faithful to the anti-terrorist concepts of revolutionary marxism, would condemn forms of struggle which have been widely implemented in the past few years (expropriations, kidnappings of exploiters, executions of those responsible for massacres and torture, etc. . . .).

The evidence could hardly be clearer of the influence of alien class pressures. Comrade Maitan proposes rejecting a characterization that remains faithful to the antiterrorist concepts of revolutionary Marxism. And why? Because of the number of violations of those concepts in the past few years!

In defending the orientation toward rural guerrilla warfare adopted at the Ninth World Congress, the reporter for the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency said: "So we lost a section in Argentina. But then we won one in Spain and another in the Antilles."

Comrade Germain added the following comment: "We did not lose one in Bolivia; and this sticks like a fish bone in the throat of Jack Barnes."

More significant was Comrade Germain's silence on the assassination of Carrero Blanco. Despite repeated challenges to state his position, he refused to do so, keeping his lips buttoned on that question.

Comrade Maitan filed a statement for inclusion in the minutes stating that while he had voted for the resolution he disagreed with some aspects of it; but he made no specifications.

A noteworthy reaction was that of Comrade Kailas Chandra of India. He said that he had come to the congress with an "absolutely open mind," but after hearing the speeches on Latin America made by the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency he had "felt quite sad," and had become convinced by the discussion that they were wrong.

The reporter for the majority on "armed struggle" had used a language that was "alien and strange" in comparison with the language used heretofore in congresses of the Fourth International. This was a significant judgment since Comrade Chandra has been a member of the Fourth International since 1939 and belongs to the older generation of leaders.

He said that with respect to Comrade Germain he had admired him and expected a great deal of him. His "psychological block against split" was an admirable thing.

Comrade Chandra said that he had not joined either of the two main tendencies out of fear of a split and the feeling that he could counter a split better if he remained outside of the two main tendencies.

He found Comrade Germain's arguments on Chile "astounding"; particularly the view that one or two thousand armed guards could have saved Allende. Not even ten thousand armed

guards could have saved Allende in face of the political training that had been given to depend on the army.

The strategy followed in Bolivia had proved to be a disaster, in the opinion of Comrade Chandra. "Now it is to be realized on a global scale," he said. "It is a bad approach, a dangerous approach."

He ended by calling for reversal of the line of the Ninth World Congress.

Later he told some of the comrades that in India, before coming to the congress, he had misjudged the situation. After what he had seen at the congress, he was convinced that the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction had saved the congress from a split.

In conclusion on this point, let me reiterate that passage of the resolution on "armed struggle" was the gravest development at the world congress. It affects orientation on tasks in an unhealthy way and constitutes a political time bomb.

Agreement to Help Maintain Unity

I have referred several times to an organizational agreement that was reached at the end of the congress to help maintain the unity of the Fourth International. This consisted of reaffirming the agreements previously reached in April and September 1973.¹⁰ The new agreement included general formulas to be followed in determining the status of sections and sympathizing groups in various special conditions.

The application of these general formulas aroused protests among members of both sides. Among other things it was clear that the distinction between sections and sympathizing groups was breaking down, and it could create a very bad precedent.

There were other reasons for dissatisfaction. A sector of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency was particularly unhappy. I think that this was because some of these comrades had been counting on a split and had based their calculations for the future on that perspective.

In any case, there was an extraordinary amount of caucusing by the majority tendency over the nine-point agreement before it was accepted.

The Nature of the IEC Majority Tendency

I have spoken about the political conclusions to be drawn concerning the outcome of the congress—that is, that the main

line of the Fourth International will continue to be ultraleftist for the next two years.

There are some other aspects that warrant consideration.

The International Executive Committee Majority Tendency can be viewed as a bloc consisting of two tendencies—one that favored a split at the congress. This wing gave every indication of being disappointed at the outcome. The other wing was opposed to a split and sought to circumvent it, seeing that such an outcome would be a big setback for the world Trotskyist movement.

As between these two wings, the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction did what it could to help the wing favoring unity, although, it must be added, without much encouragement from that wing.

In the final analysis, however, the differences between these two wings, viewed from this angle, may amount only to a matter of tactics. Such differences are not decisive in the long run.

There is still another way of looking at the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency that may prove enlightening; that is, gauging the sociological pressures to which it is responding.

We have refrained up to now from taking up this question inasmuch as it could appear to some comrades to be a mere exercise in epithet-mongering and a diversion from an objective discussion of the political issues in dispute. Up to this point we have deliberately sought to confine our polemics mainly to the *political* differences. This required careful examination of the concrete experiences of our movement; the facts had to be established as accurately as possible. We sought to examine the connection of all this to the general positions held by the Trotskyist movement since its foundation.

But certain questions remain to be answered; and some of the comrades, especially the Argentinians, have pressed for answers. For example:

1. How are we to explain the attraction of the "strategy of armed struggle" to the leaders of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency?

2. How are we to explain the blindness of these leaders to the lessons of events showing the bankruptcy of that strategy?

3. How are we to explain their persistence in continuing it with whatever partial self-criticisms?

4. How are we to explain their growing tendency to generalize this line and to convert it into something of universal application?

5. How are we to explain their tendency to elaborate a new theory on it the way their reporter did at the world congress?

6. How are we to explain their striking drift away from the positions long ago reached on this question by the revolutionary Marxist movement?

7. How are we to explain their brazen, or in some instances shamefaced, support of such a terrorist action as the assassination of Carrero Blanco?

8. How do we explain their mounting determination to put this line more and more into practice?

Where are the answers to such questions to be found?

I think that the key lies in their lack of roots in the working class and the labor movement. They lack the steadying influence of immersion in the proletariat.

Consider how revealing is their constant preoccupation with the problem of "linking up" with the workers. If you are rooted in the working class this problem does not arise.

Consider again their insistence on small group actions. This is not characteristic of the working class, which prefers to use the most powerful weapon at its disposal—the mobilization of its vast numbers in a cohesive way, as seen in strikes.

The rural guerrilla warfare, with which these leaders were enamored in 1969 and for a time after that, is characteristic of the peasantry. The appearance of guerrillas is a sign of a rising peasant movement.

Similarly urban guerrilla warfare, which the leaders of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency took up next, is characteristic of the lower layers of the petty bourgeoisie of the cities. It is an anticipatory sign of a general proletarian upsurge or an accompaniment of it.

Or take the theory of the wonders to be worked by the "exemplary actions" of individuals or small groups. It is held that such actions set examples for the masses to which they can be expected to respond. But this is quite false. Individuals may respond but not *masses*.

What the theory of "exemplary actions" on a small scale expresses is the *hope* of radicalized petty-bourgeois elements *impatient* about moving ahead. The same holds for the theory of an alleged dialectic between "minority violence" and "majority violence."

From this angle, what does the theory of the "new mass vanguard" amount to?

It consists by and large of a search for ways and means to

utilize the radicalized petty bourgeoisie to "link up" with the working class and impel it into motion from the *outside*.

This is a most telling indication of the isolation of sectors of our movement from the working class and from the labor movement.

Thus we can say that the class nature of the *majority line* is coming to the fore. Enough evidence is accumulating to make it possible at some point fairly soon to offer a convincing analysis so that the term "petty bourgeois" will appear as a correct label and not as an invidious epithet applied to *persons*.

The distinction between *line* and *persons* is very important. The line of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency represents a bending to the radicalized petty-bourgeois milieu from which many young cadres of the Fourth International have emerged and in which they are still working.

The Role of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction

In conclusion, a few words on how the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction functioned.

It held several meetings in advance of the congress to get acquainted, to hear the latest reports, to exchange impressions, and to discuss preparations. The discussions were exceptionally free and comradely. Such differences as appeared concerned tactical questions. A steering committee was elected to coordinate actions during the congress.

During the sessions, the steering committee was on constant call, while the caucus as a whole met almost every day. There were continual reports. Discussions sometimes lasted until early morning.

The faction displayed increasing effectiveness in its organization and functioning. It acted in a disciplined and cohesive way. Throughout the congress there were not more than a couple of speeches that could be said to have been counterproductive.

The Bolshevik way in which the faction functioned was shown by the impact of its arguments and the difficulties faced by the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency in trying to answer them.

For some comrades this was the first time they had traveled outside their country. For many it was the first world congress they had attended. And for most of them it was the first time they had participated in a faction struggle.

It was a tremendous educational experience for them. And it

was remarkable to see the comrades develop in such a short time. Of course, it was an intense experience. Moreover, they had the good fortune to be participating in a faction that was a good one, that gave a model demonstration of its principled nature, and of its capacity to play a positive role in the life of the world Trotskyist movement.

The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction sought only limited objectives at the congress. All of these were achieved.

In the discussion, the members of the faction did an extraordinarily good job in clarifying the issues and arguing for a reversal of line in light of the experience of the International since 1969.

They succeeded in blocking any exclusionary moves. For example, a move was afoot to exclude the Chinese section, but this died without ever coming before the delegates.

The campaign that had been waged against the PST and the PRT (Uruguay) was set back considerably. It will be recalled that the PRT (*Combatiente*) had urged the expulsion of the PST. Instead, all the mandates of the PST were recognized. Representatives of the PST were included as part of the incoming International Executive Committee. Perhaps most important of all, through firsthand encounter, the delegates of the International Executive Committee Majority were able to see for themselves that the propaganda used against the PST had to be discounted, and it had to be admitted that the PST is a Trotskyist organization, an integral part of the Fourth International.

Another objective of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction was to do its utmost to block any splitting moves. Its course was decisive, in my opinion, in enabling the congress to chalk up a success in this respect.

Finally, the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction sought to establish the best possible conditions for the maintenance of unity following the congress. While it remains to be seen how well this works out, the caucus assured the delegates that it would act as a responsible minority in continuing this policy in the coming period.

Following the congress, the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction held a two-day conference in which there was a free and very educational discussion assessing the outcome and what course to follow in the coming period. All of the points I have touched on were taken up there.

Four decisions were made:

1. To try in the coming period to relax the factional tensions

that built up before the congress. Both sides as a whole will welcome this, I think.

2. To give the majority an opportunity to make a further test of its line. One can hope that this will not provide further ammunition for the minority when the discussion resumes, but a realistic assessment of that line indicates that the minority will probably face an embarrassment of riches.

3. In view of the nature of the resolution on "armed struggle" that was adopted, the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction will not dissolve but will continue to function in a disciplined, coordinated way.

4. The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction recognizes that the unity of the Fourth International remains precarious because of the possible consequences of the majority line on "armed struggle."

APPENDIX I

Resolution on Latin America

I. Economic Tendencies and Increased Imperialist Exploitation

1. Above and beyond the national and regional peculiarities and conjunctural ups and downs, the economic tendencies operating at present in Latin America remain pretty much the same as in the past, the most negative features tending generally to become worse. The situation can be summarized as follows: In no country has there been an economic expansion which would meet the needs of real development and counterbalance the rate of population increase. Industrialization, even when it extends into new sectors, remains limited and partial. Investment is inadequate and in no case offers a basis for more balanced development and absorption of the unemployed and underemployed. The national debt is still a source of financial crises and budgetary difficulties. The draining off of profits from the Latin American economy (by American, but also, in part, European and Japanese, imperialism) is continuing and increasing, as is the general unfavorable evolution in terms of trade. Agricultural production is deteriorating and proving in any case more and more inadequate with respect to the needs of consumption, which is growing, if only as a result of the increased population. The weight in the economy of low-profit or unprofitable sectors, far from decreasing, has risen still more. In most of these countries inflation

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remains a chronic or very frequent phenomenon.

2. A relatively new tendency which has increased in recent years is a movement of foreign investment into modern, dynamic industrial sectors not directly linked to the processing of raw materials. This has resulted in two things. First of all, it has created economic sectors exclusively controlled from the start by imperialist corporations in lines traditionally reserved to the so-called national bourgeoisie. Secondly, it has produced a grave and imminent threat to national industries which though relatively developed cannot meet the competition of a much more dynamic technology and far more efficient organizational and managerial techniques, and which moreover need capital not available locally. This means that while continuing to bear the crushing burden of all the traditional forms of economic domination and exploitation, Latin America now finds even its most modern sectors facing the same sort of threat the European countries face (absorption, elimination owing to American competition, etc.). The consequence can only be new economic distortions and greater imperialist exploitation. This means that an economic development in any way capable of solving this continent's tragic social problems is totally ruled out. This is all the more true because the Latin American bourgeoisies have proved incapable, in general, of carrying out even very modest attempts to develop regional "common markets," and at a time when it is becoming more and more clear that the dimensions of the present national states are too narrow to permit a real takeoff for modern industry.

II. Dynamics and Role of the Social Classes

3. The economic and social processes, more especially in the past fifteen years, have culminated in important changes in the relative composition of the ruling classes. The most striking element has been the decline in the economic and political weight of the traditional layers of the big landlords, especially those less directly linked with the commercial and financial bourgeois layers. The more specifically urban ruling strata, linked to the new industrial sectors, to big business, and to financial capital, have increasingly played the fundamental role, seeking to translate this economic and social reality into new formulas of political rule (for example, the Frei experiment in Chile, to a lesser extent that of Belaúnde in Peru).

However, the relative reenforcement of the industrial bourgeois-

sie in nowise means that a vigorous social class has developed able to play an effective leading role and to act independently. The economic consolidation of this class, its existence, is tightly bound up with the operations and interests of Yankee imperialism; or, in far fewer cases, of European imperialism. In the best of cases, it is more precisely joint ventures of foreign and native capital that is involved in which the native capitalists most often play a completely subordinate role and have no possibility of acting on their own. Thus, it would be absolutely incorrect to project the perspective of an increased role for the national bourgeoisie as a historical class capable of any kind of consistent struggle to free itself from imperialist tutelage (the bankruptcy of the Belaúnde experiment is significant in this regard, since Peru is one of the countries where there has unquestionably been a certain amount of industrial development).

4. As a result of the well-known phenomena of the last fifteen to twenty years, and especially with the growing urbanization, the new petty-bourgeois strata—white-collar workers in various government bureaus, trade, and the services, the liberal professions, etc.—have gained strength. These are the strata where the ideological influence of imperialism is the strongest (relative success of propaganda for the model of the consumer society, for the American Way of Life, etc.), where it is most difficult to mobilize against imperialism, and where the government parties recruit their electoral clientele (for example, part of Frei's support in Chile, of Leoni's in Venezuela, of the old coalition parties in Peru). However, the position of these strata is quite precarious, either because they live off risky enterprises or get their incomes (at least in part) more from assorted expedients skirting the law than from the "normal" functioning of the economic machine. They are at the mercy of this or that clique or group in power, being the first in any case to pay the price for recessions, attacks of inflation, and changes in the ruling cliques. They have no perspective for any real security or substantial social advancement for their children (who swell the ranks of the students engaging in "confrontations"). This new petty bourgeoisie, then, can temporarily aid the political operations of the ruling classes and imperialism; but, in the last analysis, it is no social cement for the system; and, in critical situations, it can be swept by sudden flames of revolt. In certain countries, moreover, layers of employees of the state and of different administrations have already played an important role in some of the broad and militant trade union mobilizations.

5. The peasantry represents a decreasing percentage of the total population and its specific economic weight is declining more markedly and more rapidly than its quantitative weight. In certain countries particularly, the tendency toward expansion of the agricultural proletariat is increasing. Nevertheless, in absolute terms it still constitutes the majority and often the overwhelming majority of the population. It is still the social class which suffers the worst exploitation and oppression and which, in the existing economic and social context, has the least perspective.

The causes of the peasants' discontent and anger are manifold—the traditional land hunger, the choking off of subsistence agriculture, conflict with the state administration which extorts taxes and appears most often as an instrument of repression in the service of the exploiters, disillusionment arising from the fraudulent nature of the official "agrarian reforms," fear of a comeback by the landlords in the countries where they have had to renounce certain privileges, difficulties arising from price and market problems especially for small independent farmers, unfavorable repercussions from prices on the world market, etc. In countries like Peru, Guatemala, Bolivia, etc., the social oppression is also expressed in terms of national oppression, hitting a high percentage of the population. The outcome is always the same. Far from improving, the lot of the peasants remains tragic and is even getting worse. Hence the persistent impetus to struggle and revolt. This is all the more true because the peasants are less and less isolated from the international political and ideological currents; have largely assimilated the lesson of the Cuban revolution; have learned a great deal from the guerrilla experiences; and are not cut off from the student revolutionary movements, whose influence reaches them through a thousand different channels.

6. The working class has not undergone any quantitative growth, despite the development of industrial production in certain countries. This is due to the fact that certain industrial advances have gone hand in hand with a crisis in the traditional sectors and have been based on technological innovations and rationalizations which involve a contraction rather than an expansion in manpower employed. Aside from completely exceptional cases, the tendency is by no means for the standard of living to rise but rather to stagnate and most often decline (in some cases, for example, Uruguay, to a dramatic degree). For both objective reasons (unemployment, underemployment, etc.)

and subjective reasons (their subordination to the government, their bureaucratization, the control of the pro-Soviet Communist parties, etc.), the trade union organizations are increasingly incapable of meeting this situation, even of exercising effective pressure within the framework of the system. Most often it is primarily the mechanism of inflation that depresses the workers' standard of living, canceling out the wage gains that are occasionally made. Furthermore, from the social standpoint, the workers are usually the ones who often suffer the effects of the rural exodus, inasmuch as their very modest wages must provide the subsistence for groups of relatives and friends swollen by newcomers from the countryside (in exceptional cases, as for example in Bolivia during the crisis in the mines, the inverse phenomenon develops, namely, a partial return of workers to their villages of origin). Finally, the proletarian populace has not experienced any improvement in housing, living conditions, medical care, transportation, etc., or the possibility to assure a normal education for their children.

For all these reasons, the working class is absolutely not, and has no consciousness of being, even a relatively privileged layer—as superficial theoreticians claim. Exploited and oppressed in manifold forms by the capitalist and imperialist system, they have not ceased in reality to be an explosive force, a motor force of the revolution. Powerful strikes in defiance of military dictatorships (for example, in Brazil), mobilizations accompanied by clashes with the repressive forces (Uruguay, Chile, Bolivia, etc.), linkups between nuclei of workers and the student movement (Mexico, Brazil) constitute, moreover, significant symptoms of a proletarian resurgence at the present time. If the broadest layers of the working class are still immobilized or neutralized and if the workers have not been able to play a substantial role in the revolutionary actions of recent years in certain countries, this is by no means a result of any degeneration or intrinsic weakness of the proletariat as a revolutionary force. It is the result of well-defined concrete factors, such as the momentary prostration resulting from severe defeats and repressions; the pernicious role of the trade union bureaucracies, which are more and more integrated into the government structure, especially in certain important countries; the no less negative role of opportunist political leaderships enjoying prestige sometimes rubbed off from an international Communist tradition; the weight of unemployment, which has continued to increase in recent years; and the danger of reprisals

in the event of struggles or strikes—which is a danger the workers are ready to face only if they see a real perspective for political change.

7. As a result of the persistence, or even accentuation, of the rural exodus, the concentrations of plebeian masses on the periphery of the big cities are still growing. These masses can find no real openings in the basic economic structure and remain condemned to a poverty-stricken and precarious existence (sometimes a meager wage must suffice for a whole group, sometimes they live literally from hand to mouth, most often they apply their “initiative” in the most diverse ways, from peddling and occasional services to theft and prostitution). The assignment of a part of this disinherited population to the service sector is an outright statistical obfuscation. Far from being a symptom of progress and modernization, the expansion of the “services” is only an additional expression of the economic and social decay, involving the extension of nonproductive activities and of strata with the most precarious and pathetic kind of income. For this reason the masses grouped around the big cities still represent an explosive potential which could be fully tapped in critical situations by the revolutionary forces. This potential, moreover, has already partially expressed itself several times in the course of the last ten years and in abrupt and violent mobilizations (for example, in Caracas, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago de Chile). More particularly, because of its essentially peasant origin and proletarian composition, this plebeian element offers precious opportunities for concrete linkups between the working class and the peasantry and for the circulation of revolutionary ideas.

8. The revolutionary student movement shook several Latin American countries simultaneously with the student upsurge sweeping Western Europe and the United States. Common objective causes and subjective factors are unquestionably at the root of this upsurge, which fits into the more general framework of the international revolt of the young generation. The common feature uniting all these struggles is the irresistible impulse generated by the ever deeper and more dramatic crisis shaking imperialism as a world system (which is concretized most specifically in Latin America in the influence of the Cuban revolution). It would be an error, however, to make too close an identification or analogy, forgetting in particular that:

a. Students in the colonial and semicolonial countries have traditionally played a progressive and even revolutionary role

since the beginning of the anti-imperialist struggles, and they also played this role in powerful mobilizations for university reform in the twenties. ^

b. The phenomenon of the population explosion in the universities and schools, which is at the base of the crisis in the European countries, has not assumed the same proportions.

This does not imply any underestimation of the revolutionary role the student strata can play on a continental scale in Latin America. In any case the role of the students will be much more substantial than in the past and must no longer be conceived as simply a supporting force or source of cadres for the revolutionary organizations. The student movement must be understood as a political and social force capable of stimulating or deepening revolutionary crises by its intervention. This is true for the following reasons:

a. The dynamics of the student mass movement is assuming an entirely different character than in the past because it no longer expresses the demands of strata of the national bourgeoisie for independence and autonomy. The student movement, whatever its point of departure, is becoming a consistently anti-imperialist and anticapitalist movement (reflecting, among other things, a change in the social composition of the student population with the access to education of broad petty-bourgeois and even popular strata).

b. The international and continental context has radically altered, opening new perspectives with regard to the radicalization and mobilization of petty-bourgeois forces.

c. The cadres and activists of the student movement have not suffered all the demoralization from the bad experiences of the old organizations and their leaderships and are not tied by any umbilical cord to the traditions of the workers' movement or the traditional national-revolutionary movement.

III. Political Situation and Perspectives

9. The essential features of the political development can be summed up schematically as follows:

a. Bankruptcy or profound crisis of the regimes which were presented as pilot models of the "democratic reformism" boosted with the propaganda send-off of the so-called Alliance for Progress (the fall of the Belaúnde regime in Peru following the bankruptcy of the most "progressive" wing of the national bourgeoisie, crisis of the Frei regime in Chile, deep erosion of the

Venezuelan regime, which is incapable even of performing its repressive functions effectively).

b. The collapse of the political equilibrium in those countries which for both historical and conjunctural reasons have known rather long periods of relative stability, and which represent exceptions with regard to the conditions prevailing on the continent as a whole (Uruguay and Mexico).

c. A universal tendency toward the establishment of open or hypocritically camouflaged military regimes.

d. A crisis of the military regimes themselves, which are proving incapable of offering any solutions of the least durability to the crucial problems and as a result can maintain themselves only by the harshest repression (Bolivia, Brazil, etc.).

These conditions and tendencies as a whole, which in the last analysis reflect the economic and social tendencies mentioned above, create not only a continentwide structural instability but more precisely a prerevolutionary situation which is taking the form of both a more or less rapid ripening of profound social and political explosions (Brazil, Mexico, Chile), the outbreak of real revolutionary crises (Uruguay), and the emergence of a state of civil war in certain countries (Guatemala and partially Bolivia). The year 1968, in particular, was marked by a new revolutionary upsurge expressed in the mass mobilizations in Mexico and Brazil, the July-August crisis in Uruguay, the breakup of the regime and renewal of struggle in Bolivia a few months after the grave defeat of the guerrilla group led by Che, and the first symptoms of a revival of working-class nuclei in countries which have undergone years of stagnation (for example, Argentina).

10. In view also of the international context (involving primarily the Cuban revolution's continuing to play its historic role),* the general perspective must be one of increasing and

*It is not the purpose of this document to analyze the inner development of the Cuban revolution. However, it is obvious that the survival of the Cuban revolution and its maintaining its present role are dependent in the long run on an extension of the revolution in Latin America. The threat of imperialist military action against Cuba still exists, and the crushing of the revolutionary regime would have very grave repercussions throughout Latin America. The danger of bureaucratization is not excluded. Objective factors favor such a development despite the conscious antibureaucratic campaign by a leadership which over a decade has given many proofs of its capacity.

mounting social and political tensions tending toward the outbreak of revolutionary situations.

In the economic sphere, a major improvement and hence a reversal of the trend would only be possible, for example, under the following conditions: a substantial rise in agricultural production; industrial development capable of absorbing large masses of the unemployed or underemployed population; the creation of new jobs for the youths leaving the universities and schools generally; a favorable trend in the prices of certain products on the world market; the defense and expansion of outlets compromised or threatened, among other things, by the Common Market and the arrangements between the Common Market and certain African countries; and the development, if only very incompletely, of Latin American common markets. These are clearly unrealizable conditions in the present context, and thus the situation is hopeless for any economic solution, with all the inevitable implications this entails in the political field. In this context, then, the ruling classes will have no chance of forming coalitions or blocs on any even relatively stable base. In particular, this is so because none of the strata of these classes—including the “new” national bourgeoisie—can get any real popular support either in the cities or in the countryside; because, as difficulties mount, internecine struggles within these classes will inevitably multiply; and because American imperialism’s margin for maneuver—most of all in the economic sphere but also in the political—is tending to shrink constantly.

This does not exclude possible oscillations in the most disparate directions, including new ephemeral pseudoreformist attempts, political gambles, and even variants within the framework of military regimes (groups of officers are continually playing at “Nasserism” in several countries, and the immediate import of military coups is not always the same in every given situation). But this will change nothing in the general, deep-seated tendency: in a situation of chronic crisis and prerevolutionary tensions, the ruling classes will inevitably be impelled to adopt brutal repressive measures and utilize despotic and terrorist political regimes. Since these classes often are not very solid as social forces and cannot realistically contemplate solving their problems with popularly based reactionary regimes on the fascist model, military regimes remain the most likely recourse.

This is all the more so because the military strives to constitute a relatively coherent force united by common caste interests and

characterized by a discipline absent from other social formations, thus able to function effectively as an instrument of leadership and political organization and even to outline an ideology of its own (which does not exclude the existence of perceptibly different currents among the military, reflecting in the last analysis different places in the hierarchy and different shares in the booty).

To the extent that the native conservative forces reveal their inherent impotence more directly and prove incapable of preventing the collapse of the system, American imperialism will finally be compelled to intervene militarily, either in direct form or in the guise of one of its "national" allies.

Thus not only in a historical sense but in a more direct and immediate one, Latin America has entered a period of revolutionary explosions and conflicts, of armed struggle on different levels against the native ruling classes and imperialism, and of prolonged civil war on a continental scale.

It goes without saying that this conclusion by no means implies the simplistic interpretation of an inevitable collapse of the system. If the objective possibilities are not exploited in time by the revolutionists, imperialism and indigenous capitalism will reorganize, if only precariously, alternating between "new" and traditional solutions.

IV. Criteria and Lines of a Revolutionary Strategy

11. The fundamental dynamics of the Latin American revolution is the dynamics of permanent revolution, in the sense that the revolution is developing into a socialist revolution without intermediary stages or dividing lines. This does not mean that the revolution could not begin as a democratic anti-imperialist revolution in regard to its objectives and the consciousness of the masses participating in it. But such a possibility does not affect the inherent logic of the process with all its inevitable implications for the lineup and role of the social classes. Because a workers' state already exists in Latin America, in an eminently revolutionary world context; because the broadest masses are constantly impelled by powerful objective factors to struggle against the capitalist system as such and have made great advances in their social and political consciousness; and because the imperialists, after the Cuban experience, have clearly recognized the dynamics of the confrontation that is developing, the perspective of the permanent revolution is no longer only a

historical tendency but a reality in this stage of the class struggle. The age of permanent revolution, in a direct and immediate sense, has already begun in Latin America. The fact that this conclusion is shared by the leadership of the first Latin American socialist revolution is a historic step forward. This leadership by its attitudes, its actions, and generalizations has contributed in a decisive way to the maturing of a new vanguard.

12. The first conclusion that follows from this analysis is that any perspective of collaborating with the "national" bourgeoisie or certain of its so-called progressive sectors must be rejected. Parallel to this, all equivocal conceptions or formulas on the nature of the revolution such as "national democracy," "people's democracy," "anti-imperialist revolution," or "bloc of four classes," which have been irretrievably refuted both positively and negatively by vital revolutionary experiences, must be rejected. In this area, too, what was true in general in the past is assuming a more concrete and immediate importance when, faced with the Cuban workers' state, the bourgeoisie cannot help but align itself on the side of imperialism (leaving aside possible temporary diplomatic maneuvers) and is proving itself absolutely incapable of achieving a program of even the most modest democratic reforms. New or relatively new tendencies in industrial development (see points 2 and 3) do not justify any change in the basic evaluation. The national-bourgeois strata linked to modern industry arise or develop by intertwining themselves completely within the imperialist structures and in strictest dependence on them. They are intrinsically incapable of the least independent action in either the economic or political fields.

13. In a revolution proceeding according to the logic of the permanent revolution and in a worldwide and Latin American context which necessarily forces a split between the fundamental classes from the outset, the leading role in achieving revolutionary democratic objectives belongs to the working class, which, by its place in the process of production, is the basic force antagonistic not only to imperialism but to native capital. This does not imply any underestimation of the role of the peasantry, especially of the poorest peasant strata and radicalized petty-bourgeois layers. In fact, in most of the countries the most probable variant is that for a rather long period the peasants will have to bear the main weight of the struggle and the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie in considerable measure will

provide the cadres of the movement. This means that the leading role of the proletariat can be exercised under diverse forms: either directly by the wage workers (industrial workers, miners, or agricultural workers) participating at the head of revolutionary struggles, which will doubtless be the case in only a minority of Latin American countries; or indirectly, the leadership of these struggles being in the hands of organizations, tendencies, or cadres issuing from the workers' movement; or in the historic sense of the term, by means of the program and theories issuing from Marxism. The completion of the revolution into a socialist revolution is in any case inconceivable without the mobilization and very broad participation of the proletariat.

14. The problem now posed in Latin America is not that of determining in general terms the driving forces of the revolution, a problem which for revolutionary Marxists has been resolved at the theoretical level. The working class, still representing a small percentage of the population in most of these countries, obviously cannot play its role without the fundamental and irreplaceable support of the peasantry. The events of 1968, moreover, have further clarified the role which radicalized petty-bourgeois strata and the masses of student youth can play (among other things, they can serve as a medium for concrete interaction between the cities and the countryside, between the urban vanguard and the vanguard forming in the villages). Gigantic forces composed of millions of men and women in fact exist and can be mobilized in revolutionary struggle now or in the next stage. The real problem is to determine and to apply a strategy based on premises of general scope while being at the same time adjusted to specific and conjunctural needs, which could take advantage of all the existing potential, coordinate the different sectors, and strike the adversary effectively without running the danger of the movement being crushed. In the immediate future, the revolutionary vanguard must be aware of the grave danger inherent in the present situation, characterized, particularly in several countries, by a crying contradiction between the objective potential and the subjective will to struggle of broad strata on the one hand and on the other by the persistent weakness of the organized vanguard, even sectors which have played an effective role in major episodes of the most recent years. The danger lies more precisely in the possibility either of spontaneous explosions without a leadership and without clear perspectives, or premature and adventurist moves by nuclei of courageous militants. In both

cases, the result would be a quick and murderous repression which would decimate the vanguard and throw the movement back.

15. The rich experiences in guerrilla warfare—with its successes, its vital role in upsetting the political equilibrium, and even its grave defeats—as well as the experiences with great mass movements, especially in 1968, which have revalidated urban struggles, against the generalizations of superficial theoreticians, but which have at the same time confirmed their limitations and their blind alleys, make it possible now to delineate more clearly an overall strategy, avoiding the sterile antithesis between conceptions based on the absolute primacy of mass work, which consider guerrilla warfare to be only a completely secondary point of support, and simplistic conceptions, according to which guerrilla warfare alone can unfailingly unleash a revolutionary process and assure its victorious development.

There is no universally valid formula which can be applied to surmount difficulties and contradictions which have real objective roots; even the adoption of correct basic guidelines offers no automatic guarantee against making mistakes in applying them. In other words, no generalization is sufficient to resolve the problems facing the revolutionary movement unless it is constantly tested and enriched by concrete analyses. The failure of certain guerrilla experiments (in Peru, for example) came about, in large measure, more from errors in assessing the situation, the trends, and the relationship of forces among the masses than from errors in conception.

In Latin America, the polemic between the advocates of the “democratic” and “peaceful” road and the advocates of the revolutionary road has been entirely outmoded; the first hypothesis does not have the least objective justification and can be defended only by naive and unrepentant utopians or by ossified bureaucrats who have lost all revolutionary perspective and inspiration and whose sole concern is to cover up their conservative, routinist practices with theoretical obfuscation. The problem which is posed is that of the concrete forms of the revolutionary road; it is necessary to guard against simplistic schemas on the one hand, but on the other, no concession whatever must be made to ideas according to which armed confrontation, conceived as the culmination of a progressive rise and broadening of the mass movement, can in principle be reduced to a minimum.

The fundamental perspective, the only realistic perspective for Latin America is that of an armed struggle which may last for long years. This is why the technical preparation cannot be conceived merely as one of the aspects of the revolutionary work, but as the fundamental aspect on a continental scale, and one of the fundamental aspects in countries where the minimum conditions have not yet been met. It must not be forgotten, however, that the armed struggle itself cannot succeed, in the last analysis, except on the basis of a correct political line, and that the application of such a revolutionary strategy requires first assembling a minimum of organized and politically homogeneous forces.

16. The great mass mobilizations of 1968 were extraordinarily important because they expressed the depth and explosive nature of the contradictions of Latin American society and its structures; because they swept away with one blow all the "theorizing" on the inherent corruption of the urban milieu and *a fortiori* all the lucubrations on the incapacity of the worker masses and the urban masses in general to play a dynamic revolutionary role; because they gave a powerful stimulus to the maturing of thousands of new cadres who will be instrumental in the victory of the revolutionary struggles which are being prepared. Nonetheless, revolutionary Marxists cannot conclude from this that the "classical" variant calling for a progressive rise and broadening of the mass movement and its structuring and reenforcement through traditional organizational forms before it reaches the armed struggle has been revalidated. In the international context, after all the experiences of the last decade and in face of an increasingly brutal repression by the native ruling classes and imperialism, such a variant is not the most probable. In reality, the adversary is in nowise ready to allow a mass revolutionary movement to organize more or less legally or normally, not only because in the given economic and social conditions a general mobilization even for economic goals would threaten disastrous consequences for the system, but also and above all because the men in power no longer underestimate the dynamics of mass movements, even when they start off with limited objectives. The experience of Bolivia, where all forms of normal organizational activity are continually stamped out, as well as the experience of Peru, where the repression has not let up since 1962, especially in the countryside, are absolutely clear. The same holds for Mexico, where the ruling class, reverting to its most barbaric traditions, did not hesitate to stage a full-fledged

massacre of the students (the Brazilian regime's official and "semiofficial" counterattack followed the same logic).

The exceptional variant of an explosive crisis involving the breaking up or paralysis of the state apparatus and a mass mobilization so impetuous that it could prevent or neutralize recourse to repression as a decisive measure cannot be categorically excluded, but a strategy on a continental scale cannot be based on exceptional phenomena, and in such a case imperialism would very likely intervene militarily (as happened already in the case of Santo Domingo).

17. Even in the case of countries where large mobilizations and class conflicts in the cities may occur first, civil war will take manifold forms of armed struggle, in which the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare, the term having primarily a geographical-military meaning and not necessarily implying an exclusively peasant composition of the fighting detachments (or even necessarily preponderantly peasant composition). In this sense, armed struggle in Latin America means fundamentally guerrilla warfare.

The strict selection of this central axis must be complemented by a very precise understanding that there will inevitably be a whole gamut of variants and that the different factors at work will combine in different forms according to the different countries and conjunctural situations. The two extreme possibilities can be indicated almost symbolically by taking on the one hand the case of a country like Uruguay, where the armed struggle will be essentially urban and where the regime could have already been overthrown on the basis of a powerful urban mass movement if it had been technically and politically armed with such a perspective, and on the other hand by taking the case of a country of overwhelmingly peasant composition, without large urban concentrations, where the guerrilla war will be almost exclusively rural and peasant until the very eve of the enemy's final defeat. A variant that merits particular study is that of very large countries where armed struggle could result in the occupation of whole regions geographically and socially favorable to this, for a prolonged period without bringing on the disintegration of the central power. In such cases the conception of mobile columns would not necessarily be contradictory to that of liberated zones.

18. Under the perspective of a prolonged civil war with rural guerrilla warfare as its principal axis, even in the most difficult phases of severe repression and temporary prostration, the

problem of liaison between the guerrillas and the masses will be a vital one.

In a situation of prerevolutionary crisis such as Latin America is now experiencing on a continental scale, guerrilla warfare can in fact stimulate a revolutionary dynamic, even if at the start the attempt may seem to have come from abroad or to be unilateral (which was the case with Che's Bolivian guerrilla movement). But in any case it must be realized that without the active sympathy, the protection, and the solidarity of certain sectors of the masses, the chance for consolidating and strengthening the guerrilla nuclei diminish to the extreme and the political repercussions which the armed action is striving to provoke dwindle. Secondly a major problem which no clear-sighted revolutionary leadership can sidestep is how to utilize all the explosive social potential (which for structural reasons cannot be channeled into the framework of the actions and initiatives proper to revolutionary minorities) during the whole struggle and not just at the culminating moment of the overthrow of the system.

Hence the necessity to:

a. Take advantage of every opportunity not only to increase the number of rural guerrilla nuclei but also to promote forms of armed struggle specially adapted to certain zones (for example, the mining zones in Bolivia) and to undertake actions in the big cities aimed both at striking the nerve centers (key points in the economy and transport, etc.) and at punishing the hangmen of the regime as well as achieving propagandistic and psychological successes (the experience of the European resistance to Nazism would be helpful in this regard).

b. Advance a program not just of immediate economic and political demands but also transitional demands able to mobilize and raise the political consciousness of the worker, petty-bourgeois, and plebeian masses as well as the student masses and thus create growing tensions threatening the system (this would also make it more difficult for the governments to concentrate their repressive forces exclusively in the zones of armed struggle). An orientation and mobilization based on a transitional program conceived in accordance with the logic of an anticapitalist struggle would, moreover, help certain revolutionary organizations to overcome the difficulties arising from the fact that while having been formed for revolutionary combat and armed struggle, these organizations have been unable for conjunctural reasons to put their ideas into practice.

They thus run the risk in practice of combining abstract revolutionary propaganda with mobilizations for immediate goals which do not involve a revolutionary dynamic, even if pursued by extraparliamentary and extralegal means. The determination of the themes of a transitional program for each given stage is clearly the task of revolutionists in the various countries.

19. Such a conception of the revolutionary strategy of armed struggle and guerrilla war refutes not only the simplistic "guerrillaist" idealizations (which reflect a lack of patience with regard to organized action and a hope of substituting improvisations for the whole, often onerous, labor of preparation and organization), but also the spontanéist theses which challenge the role of the party (most often on the basis of an arbitrary interpretation of and generalization on the Cuban revolution). Spontanéism, substituting abstract notions for concrete historical analysis, draws the conclusion, from the absolutely necessary critique of specific parties which bear a heavy responsibility for the manifold failures and prolonged prostration of the workers' movement, that parties in general must be rejected as instruments of revolutionary struggle. From their very nature, such conceptions are incapable of providing an answer to the essential problem of the liaisons between the guerrillas, the armed struggle, and the mass movement and the political development of the latter. Unfortunate experiences have been, in the last analysis, brought about or facilitated either by false or illusory solutions to this problem or a mystical confidence in the automatic nature of certain processes.

While it is necessary to reject the schematic and paralyzing conception according to which everything hinges on the preliminary existence of a genuine party with all its traditional structures (and the Cuban experience has unquestionably shown that under certain conditions it is possible for the political organization to develop and reenforce itself as the armed struggle unfolds), the two following fundamental facts must, however, never be lost sight of:

a. The existence and functioning of a revolutionary party, far from being an outworn schema of outmoded Marxists, corresponds to the concrete and ineluctable needs of the development of the armed struggle itself (this, among other things, is the lesson of Hugo Blanco's experience in Peru).

b. The revolutionists must struggle for the most favorable variant: acting in such a way that when the armed struggle

begins, if there is not already a genuine party, completely structured, with a large mass influence (a very unrealistic perspective in almost all of the Latin American countries) in existence, there are at least solid nuclei of a political organization, coordinated on a national scale. This means more particularly in the countries where the armed struggle is not on the agenda at present, not to choose the road of spontanéist or putschist temptations inexorably doomed to failure, but to take advantage of the breathing space.

V. Situation of the Revolutionary Workers' Movement and the General Lines of Orientation

20. The Cuban revolution, the conflicts in the international Communist movement, particularly the Chinese polemics, and the experiences of the struggle in recent years have produced profound upsets, new relationships of forces, splits, and multiple realignments in the Latin American revolutionary workers' movement. The overall picture can be outlined as follows:

a. The Cuban revolution continues to represent the fundamental pole of attraction, and on the level of ideological and political influence the Castroist current remains by far the strongest. However, this tendency has not developed any important degree of organization and in fact the OLAS likewise has not succeeded either in finding a solution to the problem of crystallizing and consolidating organized new vanguards.

b. The traditional workers' organizations have been undergoing an irreversible erosion and are being ceaselessly shaken by grave crises. In certain socialist parties (Chile, Uruguay), the Castroist influence is very strong. And this is true also for most of the Communist parties, especially those which have not yet suffered left splits and are compelled to engage in centrist maneuvers in order to capitalize, if only partially, on the prestige of the Cuban revolution (e.g., the attitude of the current represented by Arismendi and certain attitudes even of the Chilean CP).

c. The revolutionary nationalist movements which played a key role for a whole period have definitively exhausted themselves; and where they retain a measure of influence (APRA [Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana] in Peru, AD [Acción Democrática] in Venezuela), this goes hand in hand with an outright reactionary policy. This does not exclude the possibility that tendencies or groups issuing from these movements can

survive and still play a certain role, on condition, however, that they break completely with the old organizational structures and integrate themselves into the revolutionary Left on the basis primarily of defense of the Cuban revolution (this possibility exists, for example, for left Peronist nuclei, Brazilian left nationalist currents, and groups in the PRIN [Partido Revolucionario de la Izquierda Nacionalista] and even in the left MNR [Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario] in Bolivia). The problem of relations of the revolutionary organizations with such groups, moreover, is an aspect of the more general problem of the relations between the revolutionary vanguards and petty-bourgeois sectors capable of being drawn into the struggle against imperialism and national capitalism.

d. The revolt of the Catholic vanguard has now assumed considerable scope (Camilo Torres has become the symbol of a continentwide current) and will increase still more in the coming stages of the struggle. The importance of this rests fundamentally in the fact that it is an additional expression of the way the social and political crisis is tearing the ideological fabric of the system, driving toward the revolutionary pole plebeian and petty-bourgeois strata who have been tied essentially by ideological bonds.

e. The revolutionary Left is going through a feverish phase of splits and restructuration with a whole gamut of results, going from the important advances in vanguard regroupment in Brazil (especially the formation of the POC [Partido Operário Comunista]) to the still very difficult situation of the Peruvian revolutionary organizations (where the Vanguardia Revolucionaria gained strength relatively for a certain time owing to the fact that it was hit much less hard by the repression than the FIR, the MIR, and the ELN), from new experiments on a centrist or left-centrist basis (for example, the Argentinian student organization which came out of a split from the CP) to other experiences following a much more revolutionary direction (the Chilean MIR in particular). The birth and development of revolutionary groups and organizations have been stimulated by the example of the Cuban revolution, the continentwide prerevolutionary situation, the anti-imperialist struggle in Asia and more particularly Vietnam, and, recently, by the repercussions of the international wave of student revolt. The temporary difficulties, the lack of experience, the inevitable failures, and the contradictory impulses coming from the international workers' movement are causing a fragmentation

which reflects in part the historic divisions in the working-class movement and results in new variants and combinations which in certain cases represent a new level in the reorganization of the revolutionary movement (for example, the experiences of the POC and PCR in Brazil, the Castroist and pro-Chinese movements in Santo Domingo, the united Guatemalan guerrilla front).

While the revolutionary Left starts off from a common acceptance of the general conception of armed struggle, a basic division repeatedly recurs over the characterization of the Latin American revolution, with certain tendencies still questioning its outright anticapitalist character, advancing the old formulas of anti-imperialist, antifeudal, people's revolution, etc., and thus leaving open the perspective of collaboration with layers of the "national" bourgeoisie (see in this regard particularly the theses of the orthodox pro-Chinese organizations). A second cleavage emerges around conceptions advanced under the opposing form of a people's war (most often based on the Asian experiences). Finally, differences arise continually over the analysis and assessment of gains and setbacks as well as over determining the tempos and forms of actions in preparation.

In conclusion, the problems of regrouping the revolutionary forces and giving structure to the new vanguards is far from resolved despite powerful objective stimuli, enormous advances in subjective revolutionary development, and the massive irruption onto the scene of the young generation. The necessary solutions can be envisaged, in the last analysis, only on a continental scale, but without leaving aside the manifold particularities and without any consoling illusions such as the automatic nature of the processes or the possibility that audacious subjective actions are sufficient by themselves (repeated experiences have shown that even the formation of a guerrilla nucleus is not automatically a positive solution; moreover the painful ups and downs of the Venezuelan guerrilla movement prove how many difficulties arise in the course of the armed struggle).

21. Revolutionary Marxists, in the work of regrouping and organizing the vanguard, must bear in mind the following very general criteria:

a. Integration into the historic revolutionary current represented by the Cuban revolution and the OLAS, which involves, regardless of the forms, integration into the continental revolutionary front which the OLAS constitutes.

b. Rejection of any a priori exclusionary attitude toward any revolutionary tendency, which, while not excluding criticism and

polemics, implies the possibility of common revolutionary fronts making it possible to regroup forces and to collaborate in both the anti-imperialist and anticapitalist struggle and the struggle against the conservative and bureaucratic tendencies of the workers' and peasants' movement.

c. Elaboration of a revolutionary strategy, based on the continental experience and the general principles outlined elsewhere in this document, corresponding to the concrete needs and potential of each country or group of countries at a given stage. This also implies the need for a political program under which broad social layers can be mobilized with the aim of continually deepening the contradictions of the existing regimes at all levels; in other words, a program which, without ignoring immediate economic and political demands (the importance of which was confirmed, for example, by the events of the summer of 1968 in Mexico), would stress objectives and slogans of a transitional nature, able to mobilize the masses at their present level of consciousness in a struggle, the dynamics of which would necessarily collide with the system as a whole.

It is the job of the various national revolutionary Marxist organizations to translate this general orientation into concrete formulas and guidelines. They must, in any case, understand that they cannot measure up to the height of their tasks in the dramatic stage which is opening, if they prove incapable of building more solid organizational structures on the basis of substantial political homogeneity, of adopting methods of work corresponding to the necessities of a struggle conducted under conditions of repression and strict clandestinity, of combining detailed empirical analyses and tactical flexibility with firmness in criteria and general conceptions (the prerequisite for avoiding any impressionism and hasty generalizations), of assuring much more than in past years international and continental coordination by more genuine integration in the International, including the level of its centers of leadership and theoretical work.

APPENDIX II

Self-Criticism on Latin America

WHY THIS DELAY?

A self-critical balance sheet of our orientation in Latin America as it was defined by the resolution adopted by the Ninth World Congress (1969) has long been necessary.

Up to now only partial self-criticisms have been made, particularly in the context of the discussions preparatory to the Tenth World Congress and at this congress itself.¹ But these were self-

1. See Resolution: "Argentina: Political Crisis and Revolutionary Perspectives," especially paragraphs 32 through 37, entitled: "A First Self-Critical Balance Sheet"; Resolution: "Balance Sheet and Orientation for the Bolivian Revolution," especially paragraph 4; Resolution: "Armed Struggle in Latin America." All these resolutions are in *Intercontinental Press*, December 23, 1974. See also the article "Know Your Own Weaknesses in Order to Better Combat the Minority and Build the International," by Jean-Pierre Beauvais, *International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIDB)*, vol. 10, no. 25, December 1973; and "Concerning the Debate on Latin America," by the leadership of the Walloon section, *Internal Information Bulletin*, no. 2, January 1974.

This document was adopted by the steering committee of the International Majority Tendency (IMT) at the end of 1976 and was published in English in *International Internal Discussion Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), vol. 13, no. 8, December 1976. The name IMT began to be used in 1974 for the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, formed following the December 1972 meeting of the IEC. The self-criticism was approved by a majority of the IMT steering committee, with Livio Maitan voting against. (His statement appears in the same number of the *IIDB*.) The footnotes are by the authors of the document.

criticisms that were already overdue; they were carried out through gradual shifts and their partial character did not permit the coherence of positions to be restored with all the necessary clarity. Erroneous interpretations thus remained possible, with all the risks of political error that this implies.

Why so much delay then?

- For a long time the debate in the International on Latin America was a major factor fueling the tendency and faction struggle. It was in *Latin America* that the factionalism of the International Minority Faction was first manifested. Vilely attacked for analyses or orientations that it did not always hold or were at best caricatures of its positions, the IMT lent priority to defending what it considered essential in its positions against the International Minority Faction.

This was especially necessary since, beyond the polemic, some orientations of the International Minority Faction involved serious political deviations which we even debated publicly.²

In doing this the IMT wrongly neglected what should have been one of its tasks: drawing up a critical balance sheet and taking a critical new look at the Latin American resolution adopted by the Ninth World Congress.

- There were disagreements within the IMT itself which also contributed to delaying this self-criticism, since they were badly expressed. These disagreements, particularly with many Latin American comrades, were rooted in an uneven comprehension of the extent of the errors of the Ninth World Congress.

The considerable difficulties, sometimes even the material impossibility, of carrying on a prolonged and serious discussion with these comrades played a negative role.

- Finally, given the objective difficulties of this type, and in the virtual absence of contributions by Latin American comrades of the IMT, the persistent weakness of the full-time leadership team of the International relative to the increasingly pressing

2. See "On the PST's Joint Support with Bourgeois Parties to the 'Process of Institutionalization'—Declaration of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International," in *Inprecor*, August 3, 1974 [also published in *Intercontinental Press*, September 9, 1974, p. 1145]; and "Debate on the 'Process of Institutionalization'—Statement of the PST Executive Committee and Statement of the United Secretariat," in *Inprecor*, December 12, 1974 [also published in *Intercontinental Press*, September 9, 1974, p. 1147, and January 20, 1975, p. 57].

and numerous tasks that had to be accomplished contributed in no small measure to this delay.

1. A NEW LOOK AT THE CONDITIONS OF ELABORATION OF THE NINTH WORLD CONGRESS

A long period marked by an uninterrupted series of massive and radical mobilizations followed by serious defeats is now coming to a close in Latin America.

The crushing of the insurrection in Santo Domingo in 1965, the establishment and subsequent consolidation of the Brazilian dictatorship (1964-68), the destruction of the guerrillas in Bolivia, where Che Guevara died in 1967, and the subsequent defeat of the workers of this country in 1971, the failure of the general strike in Uruguay (1973) and the regime of terror which followed, the crushing of the Chilean working class after September 1973, and the recent coup in Argentina, to mention only the most important events, have *radically altered* the Latin American political panorama such as it appeared at the beginning of the 1960s.

Just after the revolutionary victory in Cuba, in the euphoria caused by the establishment of the first workers' state in Latin America, on the very doorstep of the world's strongest imperialist power, the hour of socialist revolution seemed close to Latin American revolutionary militants, who were inspired by the Cuban example. The objective situation was marked by political instability and explosive social contradictions, products of capitalist and imperialist exploitation; and had not the Cuban revolutionaries just proven in practice that a victorious socialist revolution was then possible?

Under the impact of this victory and inspired by the Cuban example, *a new generation of revolutionary militants* emerged throughout the continent. *Empirically* they broke with a heritage of concessions, inaction, abnegation, and betrayals embodied in the Communist parties of Latin America. A heritage that had led the working class and poor peasants to act merely as passive contributing forces in the political operations of bourgeois sectors or as maneuvering blocs for the political movements of the petty bourgeoisie.

The conjunction of these two factors (structural sociopolitical instability and influence of the Cuban revolution, in particular on

the vanguard) determined the context on the basis of which the Ninth World Congress resolution on Latin America was elaborated. This context was also to be marked by the lessons of the Cuban revolutionary process that were drawn by American imperialism from its own point of view. Whether directly or not, U.S. imperialism was to be *increasingly interventionist* in this region of the world, which is vital to it.

But apart from the analysis of the major trends of political and social evolution of the continent, the resolution was supposed to respond to two series of problems, particularly in the view of the Latin American Trotskyist militants and cadres who participated in elaborating it.

- Inasmuch as these militants and cadres, as well as the essential part of the Latin American vanguard, believed that the socialist revolution was on the agenda in a series of countries on the continent, the Trotskyists had to provide themselves with a strategic orientation integrating a fundamental feature of Latin American reality: *The scope of social contradictions and political instability lent mass mobilizations an explosive character which rapidly and inevitably entailed violent and fierce confrontations with the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state.* The Latin American bourgeoisies, which arrived on the historical scene belatedly, during the epoch of the world decline of imperialism, can constitute only fundamentally conservative forces and are too weak to stabilize a system of political rule comparable to that with which the rising imperialist bourgeoisies endowed themselves: bourgeois parliamentary democracy and the body of democratic rights won by the workers' movement.

At best, certain Latin American bourgeoisies can attempt a Bonapartist policy that aims, among other things, at taking advantage of interimperialist competition. But this is not enough to consolidate them sufficiently to resist the mobilization of the masses and achieve a lasting social peace.

It is this context—born of political and social instability and explosive mass mobilizations, with extremely weak political parties of the bourgeoisie—that accounts for the growing and already decisive repressive and political role played by the Latin American armies. It is this context that makes a *prolonged and significant* period of bourgeois democracy *impossible*.

Hence, any revolutionary strategy, if it is to aim at taking maximum advantage of those brief periods in which some democratic rights exist, even partially, and if it is to include the struggle to deepen these democratic rights to the benefit of the

mass movement, must *also* include preparation of the masses *and* the revolutionary organization for the inevitable confrontations with the repressive apparatus.

• During this period (1965-70), on the basis of a correct analysis of this objective situation and of the necessities that would flow from it, the Latin American Trotskyist militants adopted a strategy that often boiled down to ensuring and accelerating the processes of transforming their organizations from propaganda groups into “fighting” revolutionary organizations. This transformation was considered a real *precondition* for becoming integrated into the struggles being waged by this new generation of revolutionary militants produced by the impact of the Cuban revolution. It was on the basis of this integration that the Trotskyists were supposed to be in position to win recognition as an integral component of this new vanguard generation; it was on the basis of this integration that they envisaged winning to *the whole* of their political positions the best elements of this empirical vanguard produced by the combined crisis of imperialist rule and Stalinism. While it was correct at the time to pay great attention to the emergence and role of these currents, it was on the contrary false and illusory to try to win them over by means of a strategy that took the form of “conquest by example.”

Nevertheless, the analysis of one essential element of the objective situation was largely confirmed. Nowhere in Latin America since 1969 has the mass movement been able to go beyond a certain threshold without facing fierce and violent repression from the military apparatus. Violent confrontation with the army has quickly emerged as inevitable everywhere. Nowhere have bourgeois democracies been stabilized for prolonged periods, and the necessity of a strategy that enables the mass movement to prepare itself for these confrontations has been confirmed everywhere.

On this precise body of questions, the disagreements with the International Minority Faction were real and profound.³

But they were rather well obscured (for the whole International, International Minority Faction, IMT, and others) by *three* series of errors, each linked to each other, committed in the elaboration of the Ninth World Congress resolution.

3. There are many examples of the erroneous view of the comrades of the International Minority Faction on the objective situation in Latin America. Among other examples, we may cite the most caricatural. In 1968, a year before the insurrectionary workers' mobilization in Córdoba

2. WHERE WERE THE ERRORS?

A. Errors of Analysis

The first series of errors contained in the Ninth World Congress resolution concern certain analytical aspects of Latin American reality.

- In this regard a preliminary remark on the method used in the document is required. It was (and remains) obviously correct to begin with the analysis of the overall characteristics of the Latin American subcontinent in order to determine the general features of the economic and social situation. But it was very dangerous to draw indiscriminate political conclusions, without any mediation, for *each* of the regimes of the continent. This led us to exaggerate the degree of instability of most of these regimes.

Nevertheless, beyond this question of method, several errors of analysis were made.

- The first source of these errors lies in the fact that at the time (and this is still partially true today) we lacked a *complete* and *correct* view of the *real* lessons of the Cuban revolution.

This particularly prevented us from having a clear and educative position toward the Latin American revolutionary currents that drew the lessons of the Cuban victory in their own ways, the ways the Cuban leadership itself prompted them. It is not the object of this document to go back over the lessons of the Cuban revolution, about which much remains to be written. Thus, we will only mention a few fundamental elements:

(the *Cordobazo*), Comrade Moreno, who was the leader of the International Minority Faction in Latin America, wrote: "Paraguay and our country are the two most stable countries in Latin America. . . . The situation of the bourgeoisie and broad sectors of the middle classes is relatively stable and the workers' movement is in retreat." And, getting carried away, he predicted "several years of stability for the southern part of Latin America"—in 1968! The southern part of Latin America, it should be noted, includes Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Argentina.

In April 1973 in a report on the world situation delivered to the National Committee of the SWP, Jack Barnes predicted "new democratic concessions from the ruling classes in Chile and Argentina as a by-product of the struggle of the masses." That was a month and a half before the *Tankazo* [an unsuccessful coup attempt on June 29 by a section of the Chilean army—Ed.], which paved the way for September 11 in Chile!

In the first place, it is false to think, as did an entire generation of Latin American revolutionaries, that the victory of the Cuban revolution was the immediate and inevitable consequence of the guerrilla war directed by Fidel Castro. Beyond any possible doubt, the guerrilla war created the preconditions that permitted the victory. But it *did not*, solely through its own action, destroy the power of the *bourgeoisie*, *destroy the bourgeois state* in Cuba.

The bourgeois state in Cuba was destroyed and the bourgeoisie expropriated by virtue of the enormous mass mobilizations that occurred beginning in January 1959 and continued during subsequent years, especially 1960-61.

To be sure, this mass mobilization, this enormous mass movement, was possible only because of the action of the guerrillas, whose role in the fall of the Batista regime and the destruction of its armed bands was essential, thus creating the conditions for the Fidelista leadership being recognized as a mass revolutionary leadership.

In reality, the correlation of factors that led to the victory in Cuba was extremely complex. To assimilate this properly we would have to take account of a whole series of factors. In terms of social relations, for example, the situation was extremely favorable, contrary to the legends peddled by the Stalinists. The "classical" petty bourgeoisie, the class which owns its own means of production or its own land, was extremely small; it constituted the smallest portion of the active population and was much weaker than in any other country of Latin America.

Of course, the industrial proletariat was also small. But alongside it there was a *very large agricultural proletariat* rich in great traditions of struggle, as well as a considerable number of permanently jobless people. This situation created a relationship of forces among the social classes that was very different from and much more favorable than that which prevailed in most, if not all, the countries of Latin America at the time, where the petty bourgeoisie was generally much more developed, prosperous, and stable than in Cuba.

In fact, one of the central features of Cuban society *was the situation of the ruling class*. From the end of the war of independence to the fall of Batista, that is, for about sixty years, this ruling class underwent a very specific historical process of degeneration and even of "self-destruction." This is explained by the very particular and omnipresent forms of imperialist rule and by the integration, effected on that basis, of entire sectors of the Cuban bourgeoisie into the world of Yankee business and gang-

sterism. Hence, and this was contrary to the situation in a great number of Latin American countries, in the eyes of the masses the Cuban ruling class had no "legitimacy" produced by a historical tradition and experience of real leadership of the country.

Conditions were also very different from those prevailing in the other countries of Latin America in terms of the subjective features. Which particularly accounts for the failure of revolutionary groups when they tried to duplicate the experience of the July 26 Movement.

After the Moncada attack in 1953 Fidel Castro and his comrades were prestigious militants known to the Cuban masses. Even in 1956, when the *Granma* landing took place, their organization was not a tiny little group. It was a known organization with national branches enjoying support and significant aid from the petty and middle bourgeoisie. Concurrently, there was a Communist Party which, although it had long had a base in the trade unions and among the masses, had completely discredited itself with its unlikely compromises under the Batista dictatorship, thus creating a considerable *political vacuum* which the Fidelista leadership was rapidly able to fill.

And of course many other elements would have to be integrated into the analysis to give a full account of the complex process that led to the victory of the Cuban revolution.

At the Ninth World Congress we paid the price for this lack of systematic analysis of the Cuban revolution. On the basis of rapid and hasty generalizations, *we did not clearly oppose the incorrect lessons* drawn from the Cuban revolution by the great majority of the Latin American vanguard. Even though what had really happened in Cuba provided us with the necessary means, we did not adequately combat the idea—which cost so many deaths and defeats in Latin America—that a few dozen or a few hundred revolutionaries (no matter how courageous and capable) isolated from the rest of society could set in motion a historic process leading to a socialist revolution. *Apart from the fact that this is not at all what happened in Cuba, we did not clearly affirm that such an idea is false in itself.*

Our ambiguities, our lack of clarity on this fundamental question, constituted one of the sources of our errors in the Ninth World Congress document. Moreover, the discrediting and collapse of the old Cuban CP and the ease with which the Castroists filled the consequently created vacuum led us more generally to underestimate the weight and role that the Latin American CPs

would continue to have; because of this we underestimated the importance of the political and ideological battle against them.

Granted, many of these CPs had experienced or were continuing to experience serious crises linked precisely to the Cuban victory and the policy of the Cuban leadership at the beginning of the 1960s. The case of the Venezuelan CP, reduced to a small nucleus of die-hard unconditional supporters of the Soviet Union after a violent public polemic waged by the Cubans against their orientation, deserves to be recalled.

But it is nonetheless true that at the time of the Ninth World Congress we ill understood the real relationship of forces in Latin America between reformists and revolutionaries (in the trade unions, for example); likewise, we overestimated the process of political maturation of the vanguard issued of the Cuban revolution. This was also the product of the general estimation we made of the evolution of the policy of the Cuban leadership during 1967, 1968, and 1969.

Now, this estimate was erroneous.

- Overall, we thought that after a period of internal confusion and differentiations, the "left" forces had acquired sufficient weight within the apparatus of the Cuban CP and state to guarantee a line of *systematic aid to and development of revolutionary movements in the rest of Latin America*.

That was one of the conclusions we drew from the OLAS conference. This did not mean that we considered the orientation of Cuban policy in Latin America to be completely consistent. The ambiguities of the OLAS conference in this regard were obvious. In fact, for us the orientation of the Cuban leadership in Latin America was an open question which would ultimately be settled by what would happen later throughout the continent.

But it is nonetheless true that within this framework our hopes were very much exaggerated as to the possibilities offered by material aid from the Cubans, the character of the political relations between the Cuban leadership and the various organizations claiming adherence to this leadership, and the possibilities of altering the situation in Cuba through a rapid development of the revolution in the rest of the Latin American continent.

We did not understand that the OLAS conference, following which nothing significant or concrete was done, marked the end of an era for the Cuban revolution.

The accentuated dependence of the Cuban economy on the Soviet Union, the growing weight of Cuba's political isolation in Latin America, and the effects of this on the internal situation in

the Cuban CP led to an evolution opposite to the one we had hoped for.

It was the temptation of disengagement from and not ever-increasing commitment to the continental revolutionary struggle that carried the day. Our estimation of the relationship of internal forces in Havana, on which our positions were based, was false; and for this reason it was not likely that the Cubans would maintain their orientation; the validity of the strategic choices presented in the resolution was explicitly linked to the Cubans' maintaining their orientation.

Che's departure from Cuba in 1966 reflected a qualitative change in this relationship of forces within the Cuban leadership. We did not understand this. *That was the second source of our errors of analysis during the Ninth World Congress.* Given the considerable role the Cuban leadership had played in the emergence of a new Latin American revolutionary movement and given the prestige and weight of this leadership, this turn was to have consequences whose logic escaped us.

The defeats and partial retreats that began to pile up throughout the continent, whose importance we had already underestimated (Peru and Brazil, for example), were to weigh much more heavily in the evolution of the situation. The reformist currents, especially the CPs, were to gain in strength.

As for the organizations and currents claiming allegiance to the Cuban revolution, their crisis, which had generally already broken out, accelerated at varying rates in the various countries, beginning in 1967 in fact. Their military and political failures, in large part consequent to their militarist orientation, which was a product of their interpretation of the Cuban revolution and the strategic conceptions of the Cuban leaders, had already had a disintegrating effect. The evolution of the Cubans, in part a product of these failures, in turn accentuated this process.

Although it was necessary and correct to seek a tactic aimed at unity with these organizations (in spite of and even because of their crisis), at the time of the Ninth World Congress the policy of "integration into the historic revolutionary current represented by OLAS and the Cuban revolution"⁴ as it was projected by the Ninth World Congress was, on the contrary, very much mistaken. It was the product of errors of analysis and their implications

4. See the Ninth World Congress "Resolution on Latin America," point 21 (a), page 50 of the January 1973 *IIDB* entitled *Discussion on Latin America (1968-1972)*. [Reprinted as Appendix I to this volume.—Ed.]

which we have already mentioned. It was also the product of another error of analysis, this time in regard to *the real state of our forces in Latin America*.

The tasks the resolution of the Ninth World Congress assigned to the Latin American organizations of the International presupposed as solved a number of problems that had not been solved and were even far from solved.

Beyond the erroneous character of the proposal of "integration into the historic current represented by OLAS," establishing unitary relations with the Castroist organizations presupposed a political battle, which alone would have been capable of hardening our sections up against the predictable pressures which, apart from the very specific case of Argentina, resulted in the loss of some comrades of the Bolivian POR to the ELN.⁵

The errors of appreciation of reality, of the orientation and possibilities for political clarification on the part of the organizations claiming adherence to the Castroist current, as well as of the trajectory of the Cuban leadership, disarmed us in face of this battle, a battle rendered all the more necessary by the organizational and political weakness of the sections of the International. Their weaknesses (small base, few cadres, limited assimilation of revolutionary Marxist theoretical and programmatic positions by the militants, hazy structure, the product of an essentially propagandist practice) not only left them unprepared for such a battle but also rendered them vulnerable to external pressure. This fragility of our organizations was particularly flagrant, especially in the Bolivian case, considering the other tasks that were envisaged, particularly "the elaboration of a revolutionary strategy, based on the continental experience and the general principles outlined elsewhere in this document, corresponding to the concrete needs and potential of each country or group of countries at a given stage."⁶

Especially since these "general principles outlined" included a series of interlinked political errors.

5. On this subject see the documents on Argentina and Bolivia of the Tenth World Congress, *Intercontinental Press*, December 23, 1974.

6. See the Ninth World Congress "Resolution on Latin America," point 21 (c), *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 50.

B. Disregarding of the Revolutionary Crisis and its Consequences

The most important of these errors lay in the fact that the notion of *revolutionary crisis*—its content, significance, and implications—was pushed completely to the sidelines in the Ninth World Congress document.

Now, this was a fundamental question, especially since one of the roots of the erroneous strategic orientation of the PRT—and therefore one of the axes of the discussion that had to be waged—was precisely the absence in the PRT's documents and perspectives of a Leninist conception of the revolutionary crisis.

The resolution of the Ninth World Congress proceeded to make a most dangerous false extrapolation:

Thus not only in a historical sense but in a more direct and immediate one, Latin America has entered a period of revolutionary explosions and conflicts, of armed struggle on different levels against the native ruling classes and imperialism, and of prolonged civil war on a continental scale.⁷

For us, the civil war *is not* proclaimed by the vanguard. It is the product of the mobilization and struggle of the broad masses during a revolutionary crisis in which class antagonisms are laid bare and a situation of dual power develops. It is only then that the mass of the working class can prepare itself and understand the necessity for the confrontation for power between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Not to understand the importance of this specific experience acquired by the masses in the course of the revolutionary crisis *leads to attributing to them a level of consciousness that they do not in fact possess* and/or to believing that this modification in their consciousness can be the product of a series of exemplary actions carried out by the "vanguard organization." This is what was done in practice by many Latin American organizations from the Tupamaros to the PRT.

Likewise, to suppose that thousands and thousands of workers will permanently enlist in a "revolutionary army of the people" not only to defend their struggles but also to wage offensive actions against the forces of repression is to suppose not only that thousands of workers have understood the necessity of

7. Ibid., point 10, p. 46.

attacking the bourgeois state, but also that this type of organization is not foreign to their immediate needs and their very condition as workers.

Unclear on the totality of these questions, the Ninth World Congress document did not enable us to engage in a political battle against these confusions. On the contrary, it left the door wide open to adaptations and theorizations such as those of the Fifth Congress of the PRT.

It is quite possible that a revolutionary crisis in Latin America could lead to partial insurrections and the emergence of an armed, even rural, resistance or that it could lead to a direct intervention by imperialism and the organization of a revolutionary liberation resistance. But in any event, the revolutionary crisis would mark a *prior qualitative* change in the relationship of forces (including in the military domain) and the entry of the masses onto the scene.

The risk of falling into a gradualist and militarist outlook was great once such a hypothesis was dropped and the function of the revolutionary crisis was minimized.

Strategy of Armed Struggle: An Equivocal Formula

The risk was that much greater in that the Ninth World Congress resolution lent considerable importance to the formula "strategy of armed struggle." This formula has caused much ink to flow in the international discussion since 1969. It was equivocal. In part it was explained by the necessity of stressing the differences that exist between Europe and Latin America from the standpoint of party building (the impossibility of accumulating forces over a long period without confronting the repressive apparatus).

But apart from the fact the formula "strategy of armed struggle" obviously does not provide the necessary instruments for precise elaboration by a section in Latin America, it falsely *identifies* what must be an *element* of revolutionary strategy with *the whole* of this strategy, which could be interpreted—and was—as reducing revolutionary strategy to "armed struggle" alone.

The Axis of Rural Guerrilla Warfare

The only explicit indication that comes out of the Ninth World Congress resolution on the application of this strategy of armed struggle was the axis of guerrilla warfare:

Even in the case of countries where large mobilizations and class conflicts in the cities may occur first, civil war will take manifold forms of armed struggle, in which the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare, the term having primarily a geographical-military meaning and not necessarily implying an exclusively peasant composition of the fighting detachments (or even necessarily preponderantly peasant composition). In this sense, armed struggle in Latin America means fundamentally guerrilla warfare.⁸

The resolution returns to this question further on, once again explaining, "Under the perspective of prolonged civil war with rural guerrilla warfare as its principal axis . . . the problem of liaison between the guerrillas and the masses will be a vital one."⁹

Thus, the Ninth World Congress resolution explicitly lent the axis of rural guerrilla warfare "a geographical-military meaning." That is, even if other passages of the resolution seemed to contradict this, the development of guerrilla warfare, of the armed struggle, is relatively independent of the social base it may be furnished by the agrarian question in certain countries.

The political and military perspective of such "uprooted" guerrilla warfare becomes comprehensible only if the meaning of the term "conjunctural" is taken seriously, that is, the immediate applicability of the "prolonged civil war on a continental scale." This presumed that the intensity of class confrontations had attained such a degree that class war was objectively posed for the masses as a military problem to be taken up directly. There is a coherence to the Ninth World Congress resolution on this question, but it is an erroneous coherence.

Since, according to the resolution, "a situation of prerevolutionary crisis on a continental scale" exists, it was logical to assert that Latin America had entered "a prolonged continental civil war." Hence, the resolution tended to confound revolutionary strategy with "strategy of armed struggle"; the latter was concretized in rural guerrilla warfare, the corollary of which was underestimation of urban mobilizations, that is, underestimation of the role of the proletariat and its organizations.

8. *Ibid.*, point 17, p. 48.

9. *Ibid.*, point 18.

Thus, while it is true that the resolution did contain criticism of guerrillaism, the weakness of that criticism¹⁰ was the result of the general orientation of the document, which mitigated the criticisms of guerrillaist conceptions previously made in other documents of the International.¹¹

It is thus not surprising that the Ninth World Congress resolution served as the framework for the theorizations made by the Argentine PRT during its Fifth Congress, against which we polemicized later.¹² On the precise points which we have just mentioned, the PRT's theorizations were in fact not a fundamental break from the Ninth World Congress

C. The Concessions to the PRT

What was the conception upheld by the PRT (C) [PRT (*Combattiente*)]?

On the basis of a Latin American situation which was considered globally prerevolutionary, the Argentine comrades insisted on the need to put an end to the infernal cycle: rise of the movement of the masses followed by victorious repression carried out by an army not yet decomposed by the revolutionary upsurge and aided, directly or indirectly, by U.S. imperialism. Hence the

10. To illustrate this "complacency," we may add, apart from the passages already cited, the following quotations from the Ninth World Congress resolution: "In a situation of prerevolutionary crisis such as Latin America is now experiencing on a continental scale, guerrilla warfare can in fact *stimulate a revolutionary dynamic*, even if at the start the attempt may seem to have come from abroad or to be unilateral (which was the case with Che's Bolivian guerrilla movement)" (ibid., point 18, emphasis added). "Such a conception of the revolutionary strategy of armed struggle and guerrilla war refutes not only the simplistic 'guerrillaist' idealizations (which reflect a lack of patience with regard to organized action and a hope of substituting improvisations for the whole, often onerous, labor of preparation and organization) . . ." (ibid., point 19, p. 49).

11. On this point see the article by L. Maitan published in *Quatrième Internationale*, July 1972, pp. 22-23.

12. In this regard it is necessary to reread the letters sent by the majority of the United Secretariat to the leadership of the PRT (*IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 7, June 1973), as well as the resolutions of the Fifth Congress of the PRT, held in June 1970 (*IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 5) and the resolutions of subsequent PRT Central Committee meetings.

necessity for the masses (the "people") to make their own army emerge little by little, first through skirmishes, then through confrontations of increasing scope. At the moment (1970-71) this objective necessity of the revolution—a Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP)—can be established only by the Marxist and Leninist vanguard, the PRT. But as this army (the ERP) offers practical proof of its effectiveness in the class struggle, broader and broader popular layers will identify with it. Hence the significance of the *coups de main* [sudden attacks] of a populist character, the audacity of which was to rise.

The ERP was a mass organization in formation, but the PRT was a vanguard party:

Incontestably, their model was that of the Vietnamese NLF, or more precisely the image of the NLF they derived from the documents of the Vietnamese leaders themselves. . . . The logic of this orientation—although never theorized—was thus the search for zones of "dual power." First there was a project in the North (the sugar area of Tucumán), based on historical and regional considerations; then, the events in Córdoba having shown the importance of the cities, the center of gravity of the organization's activity was shifted there. But for the same reasons, priority was given to work in the *villas de emergencia* (shanty towns).¹³

Finally, the dominant ideology in the PRT was a complex mixture of borrowings from Trotsky, Mao, Lenin, and Che. These comrades analyzed the international situation in very close relation to what they thought to be the politico-military conditions for the seizure of power. In this sense, the role of the bureaucratized workers' states (especially China and Cuba at the beginning) was idealized and the Fourth International's critical analyses (considered too critical) were judged irresponsible in the strict sense of the term (could the Fourth International prevent the imperialist intervention?).

Of course, the text adopted by the Ninth World Congress did not advocate such a conception of the seizure of power, but it was written in such a way that the comrades who upheld such a conception could vote for the resolution and legitimately claim allegiance to it. In any event, it is clear that this is what happened; it is thus also clear that *in reality* the resolution was a political compromise aimed at keeping the PRT (C) in the ranks of the International. The idea of trying to keep in the organiza-

13. Document on the PRT, *Bulletin de sociologie internationale*, no. 3, November 1973.

tion comrades who had given extensive proof of their allegiance to the revolution (and who continue to do so), comrades whose prestige was consistently on the rise and who even requested to be in the organization, was obviously correct, especially since these comrades seemed and claimed to be evolving.¹⁴

But what was seriously incorrect (and ineffective to boot!) was to carry this operation out at the cost of *political* concessions. If in fact political concessions were required in order to keep these comrades, then it would have been better for them to remain sympathizers maintaining good relations with us. Then, after the Ninth World Congress, it was necessary to provide ourselves with means by which to carry on a dialogue with the Argentine (and Bolivian) comrades and to clearly inform the International of the processes underway.

Why were there "concessions," and concessions of this importance? They resulted from the political errors we made (see A and B). Consequently, the importance of these political concessions was not grasped; in other words, we did not understand the logic of all the implications of this famous document. Undoubtedly, in later creating the ERP, the Argentine comrades of the PRT (C) were acting in line with the gist of the resolution, even though it is true that this or that paragraph could contradict this orientation.

This is also why the necessity of following the development of events very closely was underestimated.¹⁵ To this it must be added that the "spectacular actions" of our Argentine comrades screened this opportunist passivity.

Contrary to an opinion that is widespread in the Fourth International (and even outside it, with vicious intentions), the weaknesses of the document do not derive from the fact that it was allegedly written by "Europeans" living in Paris or London and hence divorced from "Latin American reality." In fact, to a

14. All of the PRT's delegates to the Ninth World Congress were later expelled from the PRT. This fact—which demonstrated their [the delegates'—Ed.] good faith, if not their lucidity, when they asserted that the PRT was evolving—did not, however, attract sufficient attention from the leadership of the International.

15. Which in any case was far from easy, for both technical reasons (let us not forget that the PRT was a strictly clandestine organization, the number-one target of a military dictatorship) and political ones: the post-1969 leadership of the PRT was extremely suspicious of the International and thus did not facilitate information or contacts.

large extent this document crystallized the best theorizations made *at the time* by the revolutionary currents issued of the Cuban revolution.

The resolution on Latin America as it was discussed and then adopted at the Ninth World Congress reflected, as was partially inevitable, the reality of our international organization *as a whole* at that time. It was extremely weak in comparison to the tasks it set itself and little centralized organizationally and even politically; the law of uneven development was thus fully operative, with all the implications this entailed for the *positive* definition of a revolutionary strategy for Latin America.¹⁶

SOME CONCLUSIONS

A. Political

While the document correctly emphasized the nature of the structural socioeconomic crisis in Latin America, the analysis of the expression of these fundamental trends in the particular social formations of the various countries was approximate or erroneous.

Thus, the document did not arm us to grasp the forms that would be taken by the rise of the mass movement in several countries of the continent at the beginning of the 1970s. While it enabled us to grasp the character of the democratic interlude in Bolivia in 1971, it did not prepare us to comprehend *the character of the workers' upsurge*, of its particular forms of organization and political expression (the Popular Assembly). It did not arm us to understand the full significance of the sort of workers' response that occurred in Uruguay in 1972: a long general strike organized in the framework of the trade unions.

It did not arm us to understand the dynamic and implications of the return of Perón to Argentina and the character of the "second period" of Peronism that was opened.

Likewise, it did not serve to effectively prepare our ranks to grasp the strong development—beginning in 1972—of a process of emergence of organs of workers' power in Chile (the JAPs

16. In this regard account must be taken of what the "center" was materially (which is also a big indication of what it was "politically"). It was extremely limited. (Two or three political full-timers who also acted as the technical full-timers; exceptional trips; ridiculous financing; etc.).

[Juntas de Abastecimiento y Control de Precios—Committees to Control Food Supplies and Prices] and their dynamic and then the *cordones industriales* [organizations embracing workers in a number of factories grouped together in the “industrial belts” of major cities—Ed.] in particular) and to define, from that starting point, the axes of intervention and of political battle. *In fact, these forms taken by the rise of the mass movement in these decisive countries for the class struggle in Latin America required a center of gravity of political attention, intervention, and preparation of cadres different from that of the Ninth World Congress document*, even though it was also necessary to prepare our comrades for the confrontations whose inevitability has been amply confirmed by events since then, once certain conditions had been fulfilled.

Thus, Joe Hansen was correct to criticize the wrong generalizations of the Ninth World Congress document.¹⁷ Likewise, he was correct when he raised questions about our real forces and when he stressed the necessity of polemicizing against the guerrillaist or neoguerrillaist currents.

That was the positive aspect of a “conservative” dogmatism of the comrades of the International Minority Faction, who ceaselessly reaffirmed the necessity of party building without explaining how to do it.

Nevertheless, since he evaded any response to the four questions posed by the Germain-Knoeller document—questions raising one of the aspects of *how* to build the party in Latin America in the 1970s—he was unable to convince us.

Does Comrade Hansen believe, asked Germain and Knoeller, that, as a general rule (with only a few minor exceptions) in the stage immediately ahead of us in Latin America it is improbable if not impossible that we will see a peaceful advance of the mass movement, broadening out in successive waves within an essentially bourgeois-democratic framework?

2. Does he believe that, as a general rule, it is improbable that the breakup of the reactionary bourgeois armies in Latin America will

17. See in particular, “Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America,” *Discussion on Latin America*, pp. 17-28 (originally published in *International Information Bulletin*, no. 3, February 1969), and “Report on the Third World Congress of the Fourth International Since Reunification” in *ibid.*, pp. 52-62 (originally published in the *International Information Bulletin*, no. 5, June 1970). [Both of these documents appear earlier in this volume, the second under a slightly different title.—Ed.]

proceed at the same rate as the rise of the mass movement, and that therefore these armies will lose their capacity for carrying out a bloody repression of the movement?

3. Does he think, on the basis of the two preceding considerations, that it is the duty of the Latin-American revolutionists to carry out a propaganda campaign to prepare the masses, and above all the vanguard, for the military confrontations inevitable in the near and relatively near future in most of the Latin-American countries? Does he think that the revolutionary strategy on whose basis the sections of the Fourth International are built must include a clear, unmistakable answer to this question, which in any case is being discussed by the entire vanguard?

4. Does he think that once our own organizations have accumulated a minimum of forces they must, in their turn, prepare for these confrontations or risk very heavy losses, both in physical terms (inflicted by the class enemy) and political terms (inflicted by the other tendencies in the revolutionary movement)?

Not only have Joe Hansen and the comrades of the International Minority Faction *never* answered these questions—whose relevance scarcely need be demonstrated—but their conservative dogmatism easily accommodated the opportunist deviations of the Argentine PST, for example.

In fact, the differences on Latin America, muddled up by the errors of the majority, concealed much deeper differences (conception of the party, role of bourgeois democracy and its institutions, legalism, crisis of Stalinism), which were better revealed by the other discussions (strategy in Europe).

B. Organizational

It would be stupid to establish a mechanical link between the Ninth World Congress resolution and the blows suffered by some of our Latin American organizations. These blows fell within a more general political context of systematic and massive repression against the workers' movement and its vanguard and of ebb of workers' and peasants' struggles and ebb of revolutionary perspectives in a great number of countries of the continent.

But this document *opened the way* in the ranks of the Trotskyist movement for orientations which, isolating us from the traditional organized workers' movement, in practice placed in question the formation of cadres based in the working class. In this sense, we must assume a moral and political responsibility for what happened to a certain number of militants and organizations in Latin America.

In addition, the Ninth World Congress must be relocated within the context of the history and development of the Latin American Trotskyist movement, strongly marked by essentially propagandistic origins, the continuations of which lasted for a very long period.

The example of the Chilean PSR [Partido Socialista Revolucionario—Revolutionary Socialist Party]—its inability to *intervene* in the workers' upsurge of 1971, 1972, and 1973, when the first organs of workers' power were emerging—is significant in this regard.

Now, the Ninth World Congress document scarcely could have contributed to breaking the Chilean PSR from its propagandist past, a contribution which would have implied a different center of gravity in the preoccupations of the document.

Likewise, as we have already seen, the document could not combat the deviations and political errors of a completely different character of the Argentine PRT.

Finally, it did not at all aid the Bolivian POR in strengthening its ideological cohesion when this organization was under the pressure of Castroist organizations which at the time commanded a prestige and apparatus much superior to that of the POR. In addition, it fostered the tendency of our comrades at that time to divert their political and organizational attention from what was essential: the organized workers' movement. Thus, independent of the consequences of the evolution of the objective situation, the organizational balance sheet of the Ninth World Congress is a heavy one.

Here we have a responsibility which must be assumed, in order to strengthen the process of constructing an international leadership.

The Latin American resolution of the Ninth World Congress was discussed and adopted at a time when a new generation of militants were joining the ranks of the Fourth International.

The political context that had forged the emergence of this new generation was essentially that of wars of national liberation (Algeria, Vietnam) and the victory of the Cuban revolution.

But it was also a generation without great political maturity, a result of its lack of experience in the workers' movement.

All this contributed in no small measure to an at best uncritical and at worst enthusiastic acceptance of the resolution on the part of militants who saw this line as an extension of their own trajectory. In this sense, the resolution was an extension of the

political origin of this generation at the moment when it was at the beginning of its change.

Hence, the self-criticism is also part of the process of maturation of the entire International and of construction of its leaderships, which also requires a capacity to assume the necessary moral responsibilities and to draw the necessary self-critical balance sheets.

In the present Latin American political conjuncture, at a time when many militants and even organizations, on the basis of a balance sheet of their own past errors, are coming closer to our current, this self-criticism is part of the ongoing process of clarification in the Latin American vanguard. It is only a *necessary first step* in a process of deepening and clarifying our positions on the situation in Latin America and the orientation of our forces there.

APPENDIX III

The Meaning of the IMT Self-Criticism on Latin America

The 1969 world congress of the Fourth International resulted in a grave setback for the world Trotskyist movement—the adoption of an incorrect line on Latin America.

Two counterposed lines were discussed at the congress. The minority line was presented by Joe Hansen and supported by a number of comrades, including the leaders of what is now the PST of Argentina. This report included the following basic points:

First, it criticized Guevarism and drew an initial balance sheet on the limitations of the Cuban leadership and the contradictory results of the OLAS conference that took place in 1967. Joe maintained that the Cuban-influenced currents were only *relatively* independent from the Stalinist movement.

Second, the minority report predicted that a new pattern of revolution was going to dominate Latin America, the pattern seen first in the Dominican Republic in 1965; that is, a pattern in which the urban population, the proletariat, and in many countries the organized proletariat, would move to the forefront of political struggle.

Third, the report contained a defense of the Trotskyist method presented in the Transitional Program; that is, the use of

This report by Jack Barnes was presented to the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party on January 7, 1977. It was published in *International Internal Discussion Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), vol. 14, no. 5, May 1977.

immediate, democratic, and transitional demands to link together the toiling masses of the city and the countryside in pursuit of their interests along the road to constructing a mass revolutionary party that can take power.

Fourth, the report emphasized the Leninist strategy of party building. Tactical questions—even extremely important ones—had to be subordinated to this strategic goal.

Fifth, special attention was called to the small size of our own forces. Recognition of this objective limitation had to be our starting point. The report noted that *especially* if there were openings for us in the Castroist movements and other newly radicalized milieus, our small forces had to be politically armed with our program to avoid the twin dangers of adaptationism or, because of fear of adaptationism, sectarianism.

The majority line was presented by Comrade Hugo González Moscoso of Bolivia and Comrade Livio Maitan of Italy. I say the line was presented by both because Comrade González gave the report but then Comrade Maitan took over and gave the summary. Their line was the following:

First, the critique of Guevaraism and its limitations presented by Joe was rejected as false. They counterposed, as an absolute rule, the position that we must everywhere integrate ourselves into OLAS.

Second, the axis of the coming struggle would not lie with the urban masses, and would not be dominated by radicalization and uprisings of the proletariat in the cities; instead the coming struggle on a continental scale would be in the countryside for an extended period, under civil war conditions that were already raging.

Third, it was projected that the Fourth International would be built around the struggle in Bolivia. The congress participants were assured that there were no guerrillaist deviations among the Argentine comrades, either in the documents or in the practice of the PRT (*Combatiente*)—which was later to become the PRT-ERP.

Fourth, guerrilla warfare, also called “armed struggle,” was explicitly presented as a strategy. Instead of the Leninist strategy of party building, to which the tactics of armed struggle had to be subordinated, the majority put forward the strategy of armed struggle, specified as rural guerrilla warfare, to which party-building tactics had to be subordinated. A tactic, the tactic of armed struggle, became the strategy. Organizational technique—

in this case the gun—supplanted political line as the most fundamental element in our approach.

Fifth, the method outlined in the Transitional Program was dumped in the majority report. Both strategy and tactics were deduced for an entire continent from an analysis of the objective situation. Although the guerrillas were to be based in the countryside, it was noted that they were not to be primarily peasants. They were to be mainly urban petty-bourgeois elements who would go to the countryside. In the entire resolution there was not a single demand relating to the social needs of the peasantry, not even the demand for land reform.

Sixth, the small size of our cadres was mentioned, but it was considered to be a secondary question. As presented in the majority report and resolution on Latin America, the main problem was to go beyond “propagandism,” which had marked the “entryist” period of the Fourth International, to “action.” The problem we faced, contrary to what Joe had warned, was not adaptation to Guevarism and other petty-bourgeois currents, but the danger of conservatism in not moving forward on the guerrilla line.

These were the two lines presented.

Two Counterposed Directions

But there was a deeper problem than simply having two counterposed lines on a single question. The depth of the turn that was presented at the 1969 world congress indicated that, at least implicitly, two counterposed directions were proposed for the Fourth International.

One was toward adaptation to Guevarism and concessions to ultraleftism—opening the door to adventurism, sectarianism, workerism, which would, over time, make us vulnerable to New Lefters, centrists, and ultimately to the Stalinists. As Trotsky explained, centrists in the last analysis are a left wing either of the Social Democracy or of the Stalinists. There is no other place for them.

“Marxist revolutionary” and “armed struggle” phraseology coupled with opportunist practice were the stock-in-trade of the guerrilla-oriented groups, and if we took this approach, our cadres would also become susceptible to this.

Democratic demands, according to this approach, were either ignored, as in the case of the peasantry, or downplayed. This

would disarm us in the face of the growing struggles of oppressed nationalities, the development and continuity of the youth movement, the deepening of an international antiwar movement, and what was soon to take place: the rise of the women's movement.

There was a strong tendency to underestimate the mass reformist organizations. The Communist and Socialist parties were supposedly being bypassed by a new vanguard. I remember Peter Camejo getting up at the congress and predicting that the net result of a guerrillaist strategy would be the *strengthening* of the Communist and Socialist parties, and that this represented the greatest danger to the revolution in Latin America. Peter's point was brushed aside by the majority reporters.

The guerrilla turn meant that our whole method was put into question. A scholastic method was advanced of deducing tactics and strategy from an objective global evaluation, and then empirically finding a "tactic" that would supposedly build our movement.

Most dangerous of all was that even our class criteria in politics were becoming subordinated to the organizational techniques related to armed struggle. It was not class lines that were presented as number one and as dominant in leading us to decide tactics; it was technique and organization and securing guns that would determine political directions. This could mean that sooner or later—as had already happened to existing guerrilla organizations—we would find ourselves in bed with strange company: Stalinists, Social Democrats, or bourgeois nationalists.

If carried out to the end, this approach could lead to only one conclusion, a conclusion that would apply not only to Latin America: that the proletariat, at least for a period, is not the decisive force destined to lead the masses in the class struggle, including armed combat in defense of their own interests. Instead, leadership would consist of some kind of bloc between the peasants and a radicalized and courageous urban petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, whose actions would ultimately spark the lethargic proletariat into action. This theory, applied to an advanced capitalist country like France, was to be advanced three years later in the famous Bulletin no. 30 by Comrade Jebrac et al. of the French section. Fortunately, it was never adopted.¹ But the logic leading toward such a position was present in the turn of the 1969 world congress.

This turn was especially dangerous for another reason. It occurred just at the moment when thousands of new members

were coming toward the Fourth International. The greatest opportunities in our history were opening up. The turn of the 1969 world congress meant that these new people would not be integrated into the International as rounded Trotskyists; rather, the turn would reinforce all the weaknesses they brought from their petty-bourgeois backgrounds and their lack of experience; and on the other hand, the turn would itself be reinforced by the one-sided and false ideas these new forces brought with them. This wrong turn they would think of as Trotskyism.

This guerrilla turn for Latin America, the "strategy of armed struggle," dominated every aspect of the 1969 congress. It is instructive to step back and look at the congress as a whole from this point of view.

Youth Resolution

A few months before the world congress, the American comrades had been asked to draft a resolution on the youth radicalization, which was then a totally noncontroversial matter within the movement. The whole International had been involved in this work. We all saw the openings. We all realized that we had to apply the method of the Transitional Program and systematically lay out a transitional approach in this area. We drafted the document and sent it to the United Secretariat. The comrades in Europe went over it, made some changes, and it was unanimously adopted by the United Secretariat and submitted to the world congress. That took place a couple of weeks before the congress.

But at the world congress itself, under the gathering momentum of the guerrilla turn, the French comrades raised doubts about the youth resolution.

Then they urged no vote on it. Then they asked for equal time to report, not against it, but about it. Then in their report they indicated disagreement with the method of the resolution. They were worried about what they called "propagandism," and implied that the method of the Transitional Program was to some degree outdated. It was as though they thought the Transitional Program was a pamphlet to be sold, rather than a program and a method to be applied in action, whether in an upturn like that of May 1968 in France or a downturn such as we experienced during the McCarthyite witch-hunt.

The previous orientation of the International toward building the anti-Vietnam War movement was beginning to be ques-

tioned. And what the French comrades in a critical spirit later called their "triumphalism" (or to be more precise, their ultraleftism) began to flower.

It was for the first time clearly stated in this counterreport on the youth resolution by Comrade Jebrac that the "concerns of the vanguard" were to be dominant in our youth work. And this meant that we were not to build Trotskyist youth organizations, but broader youth groups that could encompass Guevaraist influences, Maoist ideas, etc.

Europe and China

The second indicative thing that happened was the decision to take the European resolution off the agenda. Once again there was a basically unanimous document prepared before the congress. This time Pierre Frank had been asked to draft it. The United Secretariat had discussed it. While we did not agree with every paragraph of it (especially its evaluation of the entryist period), we considered it to contain a generally correct line for what to do next. It closed the book on the period of entryism and projected an orientation to the radicalizing youth. Unlike the Latin America document, it was based on an application of the method of the Transitional Program. It did not reflect a political adaptation to the centrist and ultraleftist forces that came to be known as the "new mass vanguard," but stressed programmatic clarity vis-à-vis them. Under the impact of the turn at the congress, this resolution was put aside for "later consideration." Nine months later the vanguardist "initiatives in action" line for Europe emerged full-blown in a revised European resolution.²

On China a similar interesting thing happened. The SWP leadership had been asked to draft a resolution on the Chinese "Cultural Revolution" on the assumption that there was basic agreement. We drafted the resolution, but we found it reflected a minority viewpoint at the congress. As the strategy of armed struggle emerged and the adaptation to the non-Marxist, non-proletarian currents which composed the "new mass vanguard" accelerated, we discovered that the Stalinist "strategy of people's war" was being favorably reexamined inside the Fourth International. Aspects of our draft critical of the Stalinist character of the Mao regime, its program, and its influence on the newly radicalized youth were especially unacceptable.

So right at the congress itself we had not only a fundamental division on the Latin American question, with all its importance,

but every other question on the agenda was affected by this turn, including our coming tasks, our youth work, our work in Europe, as well as our evaluation of Maoist Stalinism, and how to approach those influenced by it.

In a sense, the *way* all this happened is more important than *what* happened, because without an understanding of this, the wrong course that followed the 1969 congress might seem to be just a series of unconnected errors. We came into this congress with a set of common documents on almost all the major questions before us, documents that had been discussed and worked on up to seven days before the opening of the congress, and then a new line began to unfold at the congress itself, extending the method and underlying assumptions of the turn on armed struggle.

The momentum for guerrillaism, for “initiatives in action,” for building the Fourth International around “armed struggle” in Bolivia, swept the congress. And comrades sincerely believed in it. Assigning the American comrades and Comrade Pierre to write documents was not a trick or a fraud. When these assignments were made, it was done in good faith and on the assumption of agreement.

I will also testify that Comrade Livio ought not to be made a scapegoat for the Latin America line. Comrades will notice from the *International Internal Discussion Bulletin* that Livio dissociated himself with the IMT’s Self-Criticism document.³ He has not yet explained what he disagrees with. But for the record I’ll testify that the guerrilla turn cannot be put solely at Comrade Livio’s doorstep.

Actually, the dominant forces in turning the entire world congress toward this line were all the most experienced majority leaders plus the new French leadership.

The role played by the French leadership is important to note. The founding convention of the Ligue Communiste, the post-May 1968 fusion of forces formerly belonging to the old French section (the PCI) and the Trotskyist-led youth organization (the JCR), took place one week before the world congress. A strong minority at the French congress (forces that were later to split and form a quasi-Maoist-spontanéist group called Révolution! which is today one of the components of the OCT [Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs—Communist Workers Organization]) had been opposed to affiliation to the Fourth International. They considered it to be an ossified, sectarian relic, the carrier of dogmatic archeo-Trotskyism which could only repel the new

generation of revolutionists and hinder the growth of the Ligue Communiste.

Those in favor of affiliation won a majority, but at the world congress one of the comrades of the French delegation took the floor to explain that those who fought for affiliation did so on the basis that they were not joining the Fourth International unconditionally. They were affiliating on the condition that the International change. For them a decisive test was the adoption and implementation of the new guerrilla orientation in Latin America. It might be a little strong to refer to their method as blackmail—but it bore some resemblance.

As the campaign mounted, right at the congress itself, the majority of comrades were won over to the guerrilla orientation. Toward the end of the gathering, fearing the implications of the new political line for the whole program of our movement, we urged the leading majority comrades to at least make amendments to their own document; for example, to amend the paragraph that says the main axis of the class struggle in Latin America is going to be rural guerrilla warfare for an extended period on an entire continent. They rejected making any such amendments.

Beginnings of Factionalism

Under the momentum of putting across the turn, which developed over about a ten-day period, we witnessed something else that was new: the beginnings of an outbreak of factionalism in the International. Those who opposed the guerrilla line were listened to less and less as the congress went on. When one of us took the floor, the reaction would be as if Kautsky was about to speak. The more that comrades began to feel that everything hinged on “armed struggle,” and the more convinced they became that the next world congress might well be held in La Paz, the more it appeared to them that some old critic like Hansen was a deadweight. And I don’t make this point in a personal sense; I’m describing an objective event.

We began to be seen as obstacles to the Glorious Child that was being born at that meeting. For the first time since reunification, we saw the beginning of a tendency to hide information about developments affecting the International. Some discussions began to be saved for a restricted group. Thus we had great difficulty getting a copy of the pamphlet entitled *The Only Road*

to *Workers' Power and Socialism*, which stated the positions of the Argentine section, the PRT (*Combatiente*). And we were assured that anyway the anti-Trotskyist, guerrillaist line outlined in that booklet was not the real line of the Argentine organization.⁴

There had been practically no discussion in the sections or sympathizing groups on any of these questions prior to the 1969 world congress. We were not as well organized as we are today. Documents were prepared on the eve of the congress. In most countries, including the United States, the comrades did not have pre-world congress conventions to discuss the documents and elect delegates or observers.

So when a turn of this magnitude was adopted with virtually no preparation, we assumed that the discussion would remain open, at least in written form or among the leadership. But this too was rejected for "security reasons."

Another phenomenon we saw for the first time was the beginning of anti-SWPism. I guess the assumption was that if the SWP comrades were so dogmatic and archeo-Trotskyist on guerrilla warfare, they must be wrong on other things as well—an attitude that was to cost the International heavily in the next few years in relation to the national question, women's liberation, democratic rights, trade union tactics, and other questions.

Joe and I could relate a personal experience that shows the momentum and the speed of the turn that swept the congress. On the last day, Joe and I and Comrade Ernest Mandel were assigned to edit the resolution on the world situation. When we sat down to do this, Joe and I didn't attempt to reargue the Latin American question, since we had had our say on the floor, but we indicated that we did not believe the turn could be limited to Bolivia. Ernest argued that the guerrilla line was necessary and correct for Bolivia, but he assured us that it would be applied in no other country. He especially wanted to assure us that the resolution was in no way intended to be applied in Argentina.

One week later, several of the American comrades attended a Central Committee meeting of the French organization in Paris. Also attending as guests were Comrade Hugo González Moscoso from Bolivia and Comrade Daniel Pereyra from Argentina. First Comrade González spoke, soliciting support for their intended armed actions. Then Comrade Pereyra got up to speak and I figured he was also going to urge aid for the Bolivian comrades. Instead, he asked for support for his own party, for the Argentine

PRT; he described their intention to open three guerrilla fronts, and noted how they were confident of support from the International in the light of the turn.

About a month later, Comrade Ernest Mandel wrote an article for *Quatrième Internationale* entitled "The Place of the Ninth World Congress in the History of the Fourth International." In it he explained that one of the decisions of the congress was to "direct *several* sectors of the colonial revolution onto the road of armed struggle."⁵

These incidents should give you an indication of the fast pace and the depth of the turn. It had to be fast because guerrilla war—even preparations for it—is serious business. Once you begin to go in this direction, you cannot go halfway, or you face certain disaster.

In our discussions later about what had happened at the congress and why, one thought that served as a preliminary explanation was that maybe the turn represented a reaction to the problems of entryism as it was practiced by the European sections during the 1950s. There was a deep feeling on the part of the young comrades at the 1969 world congress that the International had to sweep away any remnants of entryism *sui generis* (entryism of a special type), the term used for the policy of long-term entry by our comrades into the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties with little or no open work by our own organizations. This policy *did* often amount to a form of propagandism; that had been the opinion of comrades in the SWP since 1954. So we thought that the French comrades' preoccupation with "propagandism" might simply stem from the intensity of their concern to burst out of entryism, which had been so belatedly abandoned in Europe, and that in the process the comrades were making mistakes by going too far.

Political Disaster for Trotskyism

And so we began the test of practice, the basis on which Marxists stand in verifying theory. The majority had decided on a line, and its results would quickly be seen. But here came the tragedy. If the turn at the 1969 world congress constituted a grave setback for the Fourth International, as it did, the refusal, or political incapacity, of the majority to draw a balance sheet and reverse the wrong course constituted one of the worst political disasters in the history of the Fourth International.

At the meeting of the International Executive Committee three and a half years after the 1969 world congress, after the debacle in Bolivia, after the tragic decimation of cadres in Argentina, after the entire set of experiences we had gone through, the Fourth International majority leadership rejected writing down even a tiny fraction of the critical evaluation that appears in the new "Self-Criticism on Latin America." Instead, at the December 1972 IEC meeting, the majority of the comrades reaffirmed the essential correctness of the 1969 turn, laying the basis for the generalization of the theory of armed struggle for the entire continent that was to be adopted at the 1974 world congress.

It was after the results of the December 1972 IEC meeting that comrades who opposed this course met and formed the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency.

In retrospect, perhaps we had been naive, but it's probably better to be naive in the sense of giving all comrades the benefit of the doubt. As we headed into this December 1972 IEC, we thought that there was a chance the majority of the comrades would say, "Whoa, let's reverse this turn." But that did not happen.

What did this mean?

First, it meant a breakdown of the political integrity of the Fourth International. I stress this, and I choose the words carefully.

All Leninist politics is built on the assumption that practice, the test of experience, is the final arbiter, and that after the test, corresponding changes and adjustments will be made. If no attention is paid to the test of events, we become a sect, in which minorities cannot under any circumstances hope to convince a majority to change its course.

The refusal to reverse the 1969 turn meant that further extensions of this error were now inevitable. The error would be multiplied. Deriving "tactics" from schematic projections of the "objective situation" would lead to both adventurist and opportunist mistakes. What happened in Bolivia was repeated in Argentina, and then many of the same errors were repeated in Portugal. We can disagree on what was the correct political line in Portugal, but the political disorientation of our comrades there at decisive moments was obvious to all. The result was another setback for the Fourth International. Few today would say support to the FUR was correct, but a majority of the leadership of the International did at the time.⁶

In France, within six months of the 1972 IEC, we saw the clearest extensions of both the opportunist and the ultraleftist errors stemming from the refusal to draw a critical balance sheet of the fruits of the 1969 turn. For the first time the French section decided to cast votes for an electoral bloc that included a bourgeois party. They called for a vote for the Union of the Left on the second round in the spring 1973 legislative elections in France.⁷

On June 21 they engaged in an isolated, adventurist confrontation with the cops that gave the French government a handle to declare the organization illegal and that disoriented the section for months.

The refusal to reverse the turn meant we were going to become increasingly vulnerable to centrism as well as the ultraleftism and adventurism that surrounded the guerrillaist movement and that inspired the "triumphalist" initiatives in action. We would face the danger that the mask would become the face—the orientation of trying to look attractive to centrist forces would lead us to adapt to them more and more in politics. That was the meaning of the decision not to draw the critical balance sheet back in 1972, when all the facts were in.

Underpinning of Democratic Centralism

The decision had a second series of implications. It destroyed the underpinning of democratic centralism in the International. This was the single most important organizational consequence.

The assumption behind democratic centralism, the assumption behind the willingness of minorities to submit to the majority decision and carry out what is decided, is that practice will test the alternative lines, adjustments will be made on that basis, the organization will move forward together. Alignments will be temporary, not permanent. Comrades will disagree with each other in a committee or a convention on different questions, decisions will be carried out, these decisions will be rediscussed after a test of practice; and, from a common basic programmatic homogeneity, new alignments will emerge, adjustments will be made, errors will be noted, and steps forward will be taken.

This was the norm followed by the Bolsheviks even in the heat of the revolution and the civil war. They had many disagreements, including between Lenin and Trotsky. They would have a discussion, sometimes with an eight-minute speaking limit, to decide very big questions such as whether to open a new front.

They would argue among themselves, say very sharp things, but these were never permanent alignments. They would carry out the decision—on Brest-Litovsk, on economic policy—and they would be on to new questions, new differences, coming to grips with them collectively and moving forward.⁸

We are a political, not a religious, organization. Once the test of practice no longer leads to adjustments and corrections, the political homogeneity on which democratic centralism is based has been destroyed. The foundations on which a disciplined organization is built are eroded.

And, as you all know from branch experience or trade union experience, once a position has been shown in practice to be wrong and those upholding it decide not to admit it but to continue carrying out the same basic line, this means they start operating in a certain way. They have to start hiding unpleasant facts that verify the correctness of the criticisms, blocking discussion, not telling everything they know. Relations become awkward and critics become a bother.

This law of politics became observable in the International, and signs of organizational degeneration began accelerating. This degeneration was inevitable in view of the failure to draw a balance sheet.

Secret bodies had to be set up, because you couldn't discuss the real views of the Argentine guerrillas in front of people like the Americans, for God's sake. The concept of a "real International" developed among some comrades, the concept that there is a select group of comrades who have to make the real decisions. Growing numbers of comrades built up a subjective stake in the wrong position, an irrational, self-destructive compulsion to hold on to that position with a sort of prayer that something would happen to retrieve the situation.

The Dynamic of Frozen Factions

Combinationism started growing up. Comrades in the majority began feeling there was something wrong, knowing there was something wrong, but held together for one reason and one reason only: to maintain a majority *per se*.

Factionalism grew, and comrades began drawing further conclusions. "If we're so right and the others seem to think we're so wrong, they must be against the program of the International. A split is going to occur along majority-minority lines. In fact, it is probably inevitable, and if that's the case, we might as well

help it along." Splits began taking place in a whole series of countries.

The factions tended to become frozen. This reached the point of absurdity when comrades, under immense pressure, actually voted for documents they did not believe in at the 1974 world congress. We now know that the armed struggle resolution and the resolutions on Bolivia and Argentina really lost at the last world congress. We have been told by three comrades that they voted in support of documents whose general line they no longer agreed with at the time. I'm not saying that they agreed with the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction balance sheet or that the LTF position should have been registered as adopted; no, it was probably a minority view. But under this pressure comrades actually voted for a political line they didn't believe in. That is the final, ultimate logic of frozen factions.

Formal bodies became majority faction bodies, and the more they became faction bodies the more difficult it became for minorities to participate in them. The more the minorities were excluded from the "real" leadership, the more the elected bodies lost authority. The more they lost authority, the more factional they became, which meant a new loss of authority. It was a self-destructive, vicious circle.

Sectarianism mounted against forces coming toward the International that disagreed with the majority.

Finally, as new political problems and theoretical questions arose, a real discussion became increasingly difficult. The normal working out of the big problems facing our movement—with comrades feeling free to allow for give and take in coming to a collective decision—gave way to discussion within narrow groups, within factions.

This meant in turn that the International became more heterogeneous, and we had, for example, the spectacle presented by the International when Mao Tse-tung died. If you read the press of the International during the month following Mao's death, the political divergences were unbelievable! You got a sampling of them in the translations published in *Intercontinental Press*.⁹ Leaving aside who was right or wrong, the range of positions was truly amazing for an organization that thinks of itself as based on a homogeneous political understanding.

Comrades in the SWP leadership were convinced that what was involved was a race between the political degeneration of the majority of the Fourth International and the correction of the error committed by the Ninth World Congress. Once again, I'm

not trying to be melodramatic; we thought that degeneration would prove inevitable if the error was not corrected. The danger increased as more and more new members came into the International and were trained to see this type of politics and this dead-end factional mode of functioning as the norm.

An Important Document

That is why the document before you, the "Self-Criticism on Latin America" by the International Majority Tendency, is a progressive and even historic document, whose publication serves the interests of the entire Fourth International.

We had become convinced that a reversal of the turn of the 1969 world congress depended on a new generation coming into the leadership of the International, comrades who may have been members at the time of the congress but who did not bear responsibility for the turn. As these comrades moved forward to leadership in their sections and the International and came to grips with all the tactical and strategic party-building questions, they had to decide either to correct what had happened at the Ninth World Congress or themselves be pulled under. Fortunately they decided to reevaluate the 1969 turn.

This critical balance sheet on Latin America opens the door to resolving the crisis of the International collectively. We assume that what the comrades say in their document is in complete good faith: that they consider this document to be merely the first step in weighing the 1969 turn. This makes it possible to end the factional approach to politics in the International.

I am going to take some time to read what the document says. I am going to read you the parts I agree with, not the parts I do not agree with, because I think that is where we have to start. Here is what the IMT leadership says about the Ninth World Congress turn and its results:

- First, the method of the resolution on Latin America was wrong; it was not the Trotskyist method. The general economic and social features of an entire continent were used to deduce immediate political tactics for each of the countries on the continent.

- Second, a great number of the errors stemmed from an incorrect appreciation of the factors that led to the victory of the Cuban revolution and the character of the Cuban leadership.

- a. The 1969 resolution assumed incorrectly that guerrilla warfare was decisive to the victory of the Cuban revolution. This

was false. It created part of the necessary preconditions, but only the enormous mass mobilizations beginning in January 1959 and going through 1960 and 1961 were responsible for overturning Cuban capitalism and defending the workers' state.

b. The 1969 resolution on Latin America did not correct but reinforced the wrong lessons that the Guevaraist current drew from their misreading of the Cuban revolution: the view that a few hundred courageous revolutionaries can, by sheer discipline and force of will, set in motion historic processes leading to a socialist revolution.

c. Apart from the fact that this was not what happened in Cuba, it was wrong not to "clearly affirm that such an idea is false in itself."

d. The line of the Ninth World Congress led us to "underestimate the weight and role that the Latin American CPs would continue to have," and "because of this we underestimated the importance of the political and ideological battle against them."

e. The Ninth World Congress document "ill understood the real relationship of forces in Latin America between reformists and revolutionaries" in mass organizations such as the trade unions.

f. The majority leaders wrongly assumed a guarantee of continued, systematic aid to revolutionary movements throughout Latin America from Cuba.

g. The majority leaders did not understand that the 1967 OLAS conference "marked the end of an era for the Cuban revolution," not the beginning of a new era, and the wrong conclusions were drawn. All the "strategic choices presented in the resolution" were "explicitly linked" to the assumption that the Cubans would maintain their orientation.

Finally, the course of "integration into the historic revolutionary current represented by OLAS," as projected by the congress, is recognized as "very much mistaken."

- The third major set of errors cited by the self-criticism concerns the failure to begin from "the real state of our forces in Latin America"—size, political level, etc. Any idea of involving ourselves with OLAS or any other force like it presupposed a political battle; we were unprepared for such a battle, the line of the Ninth World Congress did not equip our cadres for such a battle, and thus we left our comrades disarmed and vulnerable to the political pressure of these very forces.

- The fourth set of errors pointed to in the IMT self-criticism relates to the erroneous conclusion that Latin America had entered a period of "prolonged civil war on a continental scale."

a. This was dead wrong; “. . . civil war *is not* proclaimed by the vanguard.”

b. This error led “to attributing to [the masses] a level of consciousness that they do not in fact possess,” and also led to the belief that the level of consciousness of the working class itself, of the toiling masses, can be basically modified by “a series of exemplary actions carried out by the ‘vanguard organization.’”

c. The whole concept of a “revolutionary army of the people” is not only foreign to the strategic needs of the struggle of the workers, but is completely “foreign to their immediate needs and their very condition as workers.”

d. The totality of these errors in the 1969 document, far from leaving us with the ability to engage in a political battle with the PRT and ERP of Argentina, opened the door to their further evolution toward a non-Marxist line.

- The fifth set of errors concerned the formula “strategy of armed struggle.” It falsely *identifies* what must be *an element* of revolutionary strategy with *the whole* of the strategy.” The axis of rural guerrilla warfare was dead wrong. Furthermore, it was wrong to project what the new criticism calls “‘uprooted’ guerrilla warfare,” which assumed that the urban petty bourgeoisie, not the peasantry, would be the dominant force in the guerrilla groups. The entire strategy implied, among other things, an “underestimation of urban mobilizations, that is, underestimation of the role of the proletariat and its organizations.” Thus, “the Ninth World Congress resolution served as the framework for the theorizations made by the Argentine PRT.”

- The sixth set of lessons concerns the political concessions that were made to the PRT-ERP. Adaptations were made to their populist conceptions and to their assumption that coups de main, audacious acts by small groups, were sufficient to effect political change. The new self-criticism dissociates from the earlier false idea that the ERP was “a mass organization in formation.” It points to the error of not polemicizing against the PRT-ERP comrades’ view that “their model was that of the Vietnamese NLF, or more precisely the image of the NLF they derived from the documents of the Vietnamese leaders themselves.” The new document recognizes that “the dominant ideology in the PRT was a complex mixture of borrowings from Trotsky, Mao, Lenin, and Che.”

And while the Ninth World Congress document did not advocate the course that the ERP took, or its concept of the seizure of

power, "it was written in such a way that the comrades who upheld such a conception could vote for the resolution and legitimately claim allegiance to it." The PRT-ERP comrades followed the line of this resolution. We must admit, states the new document, that "*in reality* the resolution was a political compromise aimed at keeping the PRT (C) in the ranks of the International." But the net result of these political concessions was to give up the only chance of keeping these comrades in the International, which could be done only by confronting the political questions.

The Argentine comrades of the ERP correctly derived their line of "spectacular actions" from the Latin American resolution, and the comrades who wrote the self-criticism state that the ERP's spectacular actions blinded the comrades in Europe from seeing the degree of "opportunist passivity" in the PRT line. To a large degree, says the new criticism, the documents of the Ninth World Congress simply "crystallized the best theorizations made *at the time* by the revolutionary currents issued of the Cuban revolution," as opposed, I might add, to the Trotskyist appraisal of questions of armed struggle as made by Hugo Blanco and others.

• Then the self-criticism document moves on to its political conclusions:

1. The Latin American resolution "did not arm us to grasp the forms that would be taken by the rise of the mass movement in several countries of the continent at the beginning of the 1970s."

2. We weren't ready for the democratic interlude in Bolivia, and therefore lost a decisive opportunity to change the size and character of our party.

3. We didn't recognize the character and meaning of the Popular Assembly in Bolivia, a real incipient soviet.

4. The resolution did not arm us to understand or relate to the general strike that was carried out by the Uruguayan workers in 1973.

5. "It did not arm us to understand the dynamic and implications of the return of Perón to Argentina and the character of the 'second period' of Peronism that was opened."

6. It did not arm us in any way to understand the role of the *cordones industriales* or the JAPs, the organizations that arose as incipient soviets in Chile.

7. In fact, the new document states, to enable us to understand these organs for what they were—proletarian organs that emerged out of a rising struggle—we would have required a

“center of gravity of political attention, intervention, and preparation of cadres different from that of the Ninth World Congress document. . . .”

I might add that when you consider these last seven points, the strengths of the Argentine PST on these questions and what it had to contribute are striking.

- Lastly, here are the organizational conclusions: The 1969 Latin American resolution opened the way to an orientation that isolated us from the organized workers’ movement, isolated us from recruiting proletarian cadres, and placed upon us the “moral and political responsibility for what happened to a certain number of militants and organizations in Latin America.”

The Latin American resolution “fostered the tendency of our comrades at that time to divert their political and organizational attention from what was essential: the organized workers’ movement.” It meant that the comrades from petty-bourgeois backgrounds who were coming into the International at that time, “a generation without great political maturity,” brought wrong ideas into our movement that were not corrected but rather were reinforced. In this sense, “the resolution was an extension of the political origin of this generation at the moment when it was at the beginning of its change.”

Finally, in the closing sentence of the document, the comrades emphasize that they consider this only “a necessary first step” in the International’s job of deepening and clarifying our balance sheet of the lessons to be drawn from the past decade of struggle in Latin America.

I repeat: I consider this a historic document. It opens the door—regardless of other differences and regardless of the time it will take—to reorienting the Fourth International, by a collective and objective effort, not by factional, point-scoring polemics.

Remaining Contradictions

Before raising some proposals on how we can move forward in this way, we need to outline some of the remaining contradictions as well. This is necessary to give us a perspective on what we are trying to do. It cannot be done overnight, and it cannot be done by trying to overlook the differences we still have. None of us are for that.

It is understandable that contradictions remain and that a further sorting-out process is necessary—on both sides. The International has had the wrong line for ten years. During seven

of those ten years, practice had already convinced what was probably the majority of the International that that line was wrong. Then at the end of a decade, this critical balance sheet is made.

I date this wrong line back to 1967, when we first heard the rumors that the Bolivian comrades were discussing armed actions.

In 1968 Comrade Livio wrote his contribution, "An Insufficient Document," criticizing the draft political resolution of the Ninth World Congress for not recognizing that our task was to subordinate everything to the search for a "breakthrough" in some country and, specifically, that "at the present stage the International will be built around Bolivia."¹⁰

What are the remaining contradictions?

One concerns the use of language and of characterizations, particularly in regard to the role of the minority in the International that opposed the Ninth World Congress line. The self-criticism document, for example, refers to the views of the majority as "vilely attacked" by us.

No matter what else you might want to say about the documents submitted by the minority in this entire debate, the one word you could not justly use is "vile." These contributions were comradely, pedagogical, and patient; in fact, we had to develop the patience of Job or we wouldn't have been able to keep functioning as a minority after a certain period of time.

I know that a whole number of comrades in the International Majority Tendency would take issue with calling our criticisms "vile." I raise this because I think such language is one of the hangovers from the past as we start this process of collective clarification. We should drop the use of such terminology. The problem was not that we carried on "vile" polemics, but that we had differences over big political questions that we were trying to sort out and clarify.

The documents of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency and Faction attempted to be very careful and precise in the way they characterized the line of the majority. We noted the concessions to ultraleftism, we pointed to the pressures from petty-bourgeois milieus, we pointed to the dangers of adventurism and that this would open the door to opportunist mistakes.

These are all problems that are acknowledged in the self-criticism. None of these warnings were "vile."

Maybe we can even put aside the characterization of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction as "conservative dogmatists." Per-

haps "conservative dogmatism" is what Leninism looked like through the glasses of the strategy and method adopted at the Ninth World Congress. But whether history will judge us to be "conservative dogmatists" or not, we should avoid such terminology about each other over the coming year as we collectively work our way through the process of clarification.

Accuracy in Polemics

A second problem concerns the use of quotations and the need for *accurate* polemics. Partly this point comes as a reaction to a footnote in the self-criticism that says, "Jack Barnes predicted 'new democratic concessions from the ruling classes in Chile and Argentina as a by-product of the struggle of the masses'" only five months before the rightist coup in Chile. What I actually said was that as a by-product of this revolutionary struggle, "they [the Chilean and Argentine workers and their allies] can win significant concessions from their ruling class, including greater democratic rights on the political arena. . . ." ¹¹

The original says that given the political situation in Argentina and Chile, the workers *can* win concessions; it does not "predict" that they *will*. And in fact they could have if we had made headway in building a party that could take on the Stalinist and Social Democratic misleaders.

There is a second problem of this type in the self-criticism. It says that Joe Hansen "evaded any response to the four questions posed by the Germain-Knoeller document." Well, Joe wrote a long document called "In Defense of the Leninist Strategy of Party Building," the second half of which was entitled "In Reply to Comrades Germain and Knoeller." Section 15 of this is called "Four Answers to Four Questions." I hope reading Joe's four answers that were supposedly "*never*" given will encourage comrades to read in their entirety both the Germain-Knoeller document and Joe's response. ¹² Now some comrades may feel the answers are wrong or insufficient. But it is false to say that Joe did not answer the questions. He then posed a question of his own, to which an answer hasn't been given; but that's another chapter. (Unfortunately, in their self-criticism the comrades didn't document these references and quotations, so comrades not already thoroughly familiar with the discussion would be unable to verify the accuracy of various assertions themselves. It's a sloppy method of polemics and one that we should take pains to correct.)

There are also unresolved political questions and contradictions. While the document clearly rejects the strategy of armed struggle and its implications, on the other hand it seems to argue the need for a separate "strategy" for meeting repression in countries like those in Latin America. The Germain-Knoeller document is cited prominently in the self-criticism, but the purpose of this is unclear: Is it to defend the line of the Germain-Knoeller document, or is it simply cited in connection with the questions that Joe supposedly didn't answer? The Germain-Knoeller document does defend the concept of a strategy of armed struggle. So this seems to be a contradiction.

Another area that needs more discussion is the role of the "new mass vanguard" and our orientation to it—as projected in the 1969 world congress documents and as carried over to the European resolution and the experience of the FUR in Portugal. Here we still have disagreements, but we ought to try to sort out at least those errors that both sides could agree were attributable to the mistaken line of the Ninth World Congress.

A third contradiction is the assessment of the LTF, which includes the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party, of course, and its supposedly false views on party building, its supposed "legalism," lack of knowledge of the crisis of Stalinism, errors on democracy, etc. The self-criticism document complains that the comrades of the minority "ceaselessly reaffirmed the necessity of party building without explaining how to do it." Well, we in the SWP have been trying to show how to build a party, and we've written long resolutions about it. If this is now to be presented as an issue in debate, then at least those resolutions should be translated, printed, and discussed openly. We were assured over a year ago that the political resolution adopted at our last two conventions, "Prospects for Socialism in America," was all translated into French and ready to be run in *Quatrième Internationale* for the information of the French-speaking members of the International.¹³ *Quatrième* has not appeared to this day and neither has our resolution been printed anywhere in any form in French.

Finally, I will note one other contradiction that relates to the document by Comrade Ernest Mandel that I mentioned earlier, the one he wrote about a month after the 1969 world congress. This article, entitled "The Place of the Ninth World Congress in the History of the Fourth International," ends with the sentence, "Thus, the Ninth World Congress will go down in history as the one that began the transformation of the Trotskyist movement

from a propaganda group into a combat organization, already capable of effectively leading revolutionary vanguard actions.”¹⁴

This conclusion, of course, is precisely what has been very effectively refuted by the self-criticism document.

Far from transforming the sections of the Fourth International, the Ninth World Congress led to severe setbacks, proved our incapacity to correctly assess the political situation and effectively lead revolutionary vanguard actions, and resulted in an unnecessary ten-year detour for which a heavy price was paid.

The contradiction is not that such an article was written in 1969, but that it was selected by Ernest to be reprinted just a few months ago in the book *La Longue Marche de la Révolution* [The Long March of the Revolution], a book that contains eight essays written by him over the last thirty years. This is a book that will be used to educate the comrades in the International. Decisions to publish such material without comment seem to be out of harmony with the views expressed in the self-criticism.

The Way Forward

So, what is the way forward? In view of our opinion of the new document, we are obligated to make proposals on what to do next.

First, we must work together to unravel the fabric that was knit out of the turn of the 1969 world congress. I am not saying that to begin this process the comrades of the majority have to accept that they were wrong on everything, or that they are wrong on the issues we disagree on today, including the ones we think are rooted in the turn of the Ninth World Congress. These issues remain to be worked out in discussion and practice. But, while we must accept that, the comrades of the majority are obligated to accept the objective possibility that a turn this deep, this wrong, and this long-held could not have been engaged in without affecting our strategy and method up and down the line.

The question must be answered: Is it possible that a course consciously built on generalizing the turn of the Ninth World Congress—even if aspects of it were correct—could escape substantial errors that require reviewing? The comrades of the majority themselves have acknowledged that a series of blunders occurred in various countries in the last few years—ultraleft mistakes, the false notion that the program of the SWP is revisionist, errors in relation to women’s liberation that blocked fruitful work there, disavowal of the important place of democratic demands, misestimation of the role of the national ques-

tion. Do these exhaust the errors? Have thorough enough corrections been made? Or do we still face problems because aspects of the turn remain uncorrected? Are any of the results in Portugal attributable to the turn of the Ninth World Congress, the concepts of the "new mass vanguard" and "initiatives in action," and the strategy of armed struggle?

We have a great responsibility to the comrades in Spain to make this kind of thorough review. And in this connection I want to say that I was very happy to notice one thing about the report on Europe yesterday by Comrade Alan Jones.¹⁵ Unlike many other IMT reporters I have heard in recent years, he did not insist that a "breakthrough" somewhere is decisive for the coming period. After Bolivia, after Argentina, after Portugal, maybe we are reaching the point where we can approach Spain much more correctly. We are not going to pin all our perspectives around a quick breakthrough in Spain.

It seems clear to me that we need a little time in Spain. I hope that a crisis is not precipitated right away, as the Francoist regime comes apart, that would deny the Fourth International time to sort out these political questions.¹⁶ To arm the Spanish comrades, the correct political lessons must be drawn. Otherwise we can miss gigantic opportunities. If we can make the necessary corrections, the Spanish situation can result in a solid advance for our movement instead of turning out to be another promised "breakthrough" that ends in a setback.

As the stakes in Spain illustrate, we cannot view the correction of the turn of the Ninth World Congress as simply required for the record. The history of a revolutionary organization must be an active history. Lessons from the past must be absorbed for use in the future; otherwise each generation has to drink from a poisoned well.

The Concept of "Self-Criticism" Is Open to Misunderstanding

A second step in moving forward should be to drop the concept that the International Majority Tendency is duty-bound to make a "self-criticism." While it is correct to study the reasons for errors, the better to avoid them in the future, the practice of "self-criticism" has been so contaminated by Stalin, Mao, and their disciples and heirs, that the very term leaves a bad taste in one's mouth. As the Stalinists use "self-criticism," it is a fake and a fraud. They create scapegoats in order to avoid the real discus-

sion. The workers are supposed to criticize themselves when the bureaucrats change the line. It's utilized as a tool of bureaucratic repression, to force people to "admit" their errors and be "reeducated"—whether they politically agree or not.

Furthermore, it is not the responsibility of the IMT *per se* to engage in self-criticism. It would have been superior if the document had simply been signed by a few comrades on both sides involved in the Latin American work.

However, comrades have taken the essential first step; that is, to initiate a process of drawing a critical balance sheet that is long overdue and required to help move the Fourth International forward. We should not pursue this balance sheet further in terms of an IMT responsibility or in terms of an admission of guilt. Now it is the responsibility of the entire leadership of the International to grapple with these questions. As I said earlier, we accept the sincerity of the comrades in stating that the document is merely the first step in the job that has to be done.

Thirdly, the membership of the International must restudy the Latin America debate. We are going to set an example in this in the Socialist Workers Party in the coming period. We are going to make sure that all the key documents of the past debate are available in convenient form in English for all the comrades; we hope the same will be done in French. I believe that this is one of the richest political debates in the history of the Fourth International; certainly it is the richest since the 1939-40 fight with the petty-bourgeois opposition led by Shachtman and Burnham. And, if I can pay one tribute, I think you'll find in Joe Hansen's major articles some of the finest political writing we've produced on the burning questions of the world movement. The entire International should read or reread these documents, study them, so that the rectifications we make are based on fact, on knowledge of the real positions and counterpositions, and on the availability of these positions to all the ranks of the International.

Rescind the Latin American Resolutions

Fourth, it is our collective responsibility at the next world congress to formally rescind the 1969 world congress resolution on Latin America, and the 1974 world congress resolutions on armed struggle and Bolivia and Argentina. This does not mean accepting the counterresolutions that were put forward. That is a different question. I doubt if the majority now agrees with our

line in its totality. But rescinding these documents based on the 1969 world congress turn is a necessary part of moving forward and collectively drafting an appropriate fundamental Latin America document.

This also means that we have to place Latin America on the world congress agenda. We have a political obligation and a great moral obligation to do so. We have already received letters from comrades in Latin America demanding this. One was from a veteran leader of the Chilean section in exile in another country where there is a dictatorship. Another was from a young leader in Argentina who used to be a supporter of the IMT. They can't believe that the Latin America question is not on the agenda. Comrades like these paid with blood and with a generation of cadres for this wrong line, yet they still look to the International for leadership, to work with them in developing a correct line. The question must be put on the agenda. And our goal should be a single common document on Latin America.

Fifth, we must not rush to the next world congress. We must take the time necessary to see how far we can go in collectively working through these questions. It is the only responsible thing to do. This means organizing a real discussion. At the same time we can't hold back concurrent discussions on Europe, Portugal, and other pressing questions on which there are disagreements and which involve ongoing practice.

In addition we must be careful not to put off new questions because of factional alignments—for example, with regard to the women's liberation resolution, a potential Mideast resolution, or even a new document on the imperialist countries. There is no reason at all not to begin from the assumption that a significant majority cutting across previous faction alignments can agree on a single line in these areas.

Sixth, we must now have a discussion on the theoretical questions: character of Stalinism, Maoism, how and when China became a workers' state, etc. In the past period, political discussion has become more and more confined to the internal life of factions. This has hindered us from having cross-fertilization of ideas, even on the big theoretical questions, let alone political questions.

During the discussion on Indochina at this plenum I was thinking about how long this debate has been frozen. Rather than a collective give and take, we have simply had a confrontation of resolutions or editorials. That has to end.

Finally, I think it is now obligatory to dissolve the structures of

the two main factions in the Fourth International. This would greatly facilitate forging a new majority of perhaps eighty or ninety percent of the International on a whole number of key questions as we proceed to settle the old questions.

We have a powerful new reason for ending factional operations. The factions originated precisely in the struggle that broke out at the Ninth World Congress over two counterposed lines on a key question for the International. Something new has developed: a recognition by comrades who carried the line that whole elements of it were wrong and must be discarded. It was the refusal to recognize this that in our opinion led—regardless of the intentions of the comrades involved—to the organizational practices that necessitated forming a faction. Now the situation has changed.

We can go back to the norm in a Bolshevik organization of temporary alignments, give and take in leadership relations, the possibility of different lineups on different questions. We can agree today, disagree tomorrow, agree the next day after events show who was right and who was wrong. We can seek a homogeneous leadership.

There is not only cause for optimism but reason for determination in pressing forward. The next world congress, which will probably be held sometime in 1979, will take place soon after the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Fourth International, where the Transitional Program was adopted and the validity of the Leninist strategy of party building was reaffirmed, laying the foundations for the Fourth International today. If we can collectively take advantage of the new situation in the International and move forward together, there will be an extremely large majority of comrades who will again reaffirm this course at the next world congress. That should be our goal.

Notes

Introduction

1. Joseph Hansen, "With Trotsky in Coyoacán," introduction to the 1970 Pathfinder Press edition of Trotsky's *My Life*, p. xiii.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. xxvi-xxvii.

3. An extensive collection of the documents of the 1953-54 split in the Fourth International and the discussions leading to the 1963 reunification is in process of publication by Pathfinder Press in collaboration with the National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party in the series of Education for Socialists bulletins entitled *Towards a History of the Fourth International*. A large number of these bulletins have been published, with those available collected in two bound volumes, the first covering the years 1951-54; the second volume covering the years 1954-60.

4. Joseph Hansen, *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution*, p. 66.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

6. Joseph Hansen's correspondence has been made available to the editors of this collection by Reba Hansen.

7. "International Report," given to the November 1966 plenum of the SWP National Committee, *Internal Information Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), no. 1, January 1967, pp. 5-6.

8. "The OLAS Conference: Tactics and Strategy of a Continental Revolution," *International Socialist Review*, vol. 28, no. 6, November-December 1967, reprinted in *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution*, pp. 211-12.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 215-16.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 220-21.

11. From a transcript of Hansen's remarks, August 13, 1976, from his private papers, made available to the editors by Reba Hansen.

12. "Self-Criticism on Latin America" by the steering committee of the International Majority Tendency, *International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIDB)* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), vol. 13, no. 8, December 1976, emphasis in original.

13. *IIDB*, vol. 15, no. 5, July 1978, p. 26.

14. *Ibid.*

15. "Resolution on Latin America," *IIDB*, vol. 15, no. 6, December 1978, p. 15.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America

1. The "Draft Resolution on Latin America," submitted by a majority of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, was first published in English in the *International Information Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), no. 2, January 1969. The final version of this document as edited by the majority following its adoption at the 1969 world congress of the Fourth International is reprinted as Appendix I to this volume.

2. In April 1965 a military revolt led by young officers of liberal political views took place in the Dominican Republic, toppling the ruling military junta. The revolt, which aimed at restoring the Dominican constitution and returning to power liberal president Juan Bosch, overthrown in 1963, quickly touched off a mass upsurge in the country's capital, **Santo Domingo**. On April 28, 1965, the U.S. government landed an invasion force of 19,000 marines and paratroopers. The Constitutional-rebellion was crushed and in 1966 fraudulent elections established the dictatorship of Joaquín Balaguer.

3. On April 17, 1961, a U.S.-backed force of Cuban exiles and mercenaries invaded the southern coast of Cuba at the **Bay of Pigs**. Despite arms, training, funding, and other support provided by the CIA and the U.S. Navy, this attempt to overthrow the Castro regime was a fiasco. The invasion was defeated within seventy-two hours and 1,180 counterrevolutionaries were captured by the Cuban defenders.

4. In 1968 mass mobilizations in **Mexico City** involved hundreds of thousands of high school and college students in protests demanding an end to repression and freedom for political prisoners. The government's attempts to crush the movement culminated in the massacre of hundreds of demonstrators at a peaceful rally on October 2 at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in the Tlatelolco section of the city.

5. "The New Rise of the World Revolution," *International Information Bulletin*, October 1968, p. 7. The final version of this document as adopted by the 1969 world congress is published in *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, pp. 667-88.

6. Leon Trotsky, "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," in *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, 3rd ed. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1977), pp. 113-14. The Fourth International adopted this basic programmatic document at its Founding Congress in 1938.

7. **Hugo Blanco** (1935-), a leader of the Peruvian Trotskyist movement and of the Fourth International, led a mass movement of Quechua Indians in Peru for union organization and land reform in the early 1960s. Arrested in 1963 and sentenced to death, Blanco was saved from execution by an international solidarity campaign. In prison, he analyzed his experiences and wrote *Land or Death: The Peasant Struggle in Peru* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972). Blanco was amnestied in

1970 and forced into exile in 1971. He returned in 1975, was deported again in 1976, returned in early 1978, was deported again in May, and returned in July after he was elected to Peru's Constituent Assembly.

8. **Ernesto "Che" Guevara** (1928-1967) was a central leader of the Cuban revolution and became the most famous martyr of the guerrilla campaigns of the 1960s. He was born in Argentina, trained as a physician, and traveled widely in Latin America. In 1953 he went to Guatemala, where he supported the reforms of the left-liberal government of Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán. When the army, backed by the CIA, seized power in 1954 Che escaped to Mexico, where he met Fidel Castro and became one of the central leaders of the July 26 Movement. He was one of the principal military leaders of the Cuban rebellion against the Batista dictatorship, and became president of the Cuban national bank in the fall of 1959 when the Castro leadership established a workers' and farmers' government in Cuba. He served as minister of industry in 1961-65. He dropped from public view in March 1965, first to advise African nationalist struggles, and then to lead his guerrilla band in Bolivia. Che's Bolivian guerrilla campaign was the most important attempt by the Castro leadership to use the tactic of guerrilla warfare to extend the revolution in Latin America. It was begun in November 1966, with Guevara in command of a small force of Cubans and Bolivians which later adopted the name Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN—National Liberation Army). With the aid of the CIA and the U.S. Green Berets, the Bolivian army was able to hunt down and eventually destroy Che's guerrilla force. Che himself was wounded and captured on October 8, 1967. He was murdered the next day.

9. The **July 26 Movement** was formed by Fidel Castro in 1955 following his release from imprisonment for leading an unsuccessful armed attack on the Moncada fortress on July 26, 1953, to bring down the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. The July 26 Movement was the organization that led the armed struggle against Batista in 1956-59. In 1961 it merged with the Revolutionary Student Directorate and the Popular Socialist Party (PSP—the Cuban Stalinists).

10. The **Tricontinental Conference** was held in Havana, January 3-15, 1966. This meeting, sponsored by the Cuban leadership, founded the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. On the closing day of the conference, Fidel Castro made a speech attacking Trotskyism as "a vulgar instrument of imperialism and reaction." For Joseph Hansen's reply to this speech, see "Adolfo Gilly, Fidel Castro, and the Fourth International" in his book *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1978).

11. The **May-June 1968 upsurge in France** began with student demonstrations at the Sorbonne in Paris on May 3, 1968. This touched off a series of street battles with the French police that led on May 10 to the "night of the barricades" in Paris's Latin Quarter, involving some 40,000 students. The student struggle detonated a nationwide near-revolutionary general strike which by mid-May involved 10 million workers. When the

workers on May 27 overwhelmingly rejected a back-to-work agreement negotiated between the government and the trade union and Communist Party officials, France teetered on the brink of revolution. Opposition by the Communist Party to the strike succeeded in paralyzing further development of the revolutionary situation and saving French capitalism. The **French Trotskyists**, then organized in the Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire (JCR—Revolutionary Communist Youth) and the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI—Internationalist Communist Party) played a central leadership role among the students in pushing the anticapitalist upsurge forward, but could not counter the influence among the industrial workers of the far larger Communist Party.

12. The ouster of Antonín Novotný as head of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in January 1968 set off a process of mass radicalization and a deepgoing democratic reform movement under his successor, Alexander Dubcek. On August 20, 1968, the **invasion of Czechoslovakia** by some 650,000 Soviet and other Warsaw Pact troops put an end to the "Prague Spring." Castro's speech on the invasion appeared in *Intercontinental Press*, September 2, 9, and 16, 1968, and is reprinted in *Selected Speeches of Fidel Castro*, an Education for Socialists bulletin (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1979). Joseph Hansen's analysis, "Fidel Castro and the Events in Czechoslovakia," appeared in *Intercontinental Press*, November 25, 1968, and is reprinted in *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution*.

13. **Blas Roca** was a central leader of the Stalinist Popular Socialist Party (PSP) of Cuba from 1934. (The party was founded under the name Communist Party, but adopted the name PSP in 1944.) The PSP opposed Castro's July 26 Movement until after the overthrow of Batista. Following the merger of the PSP with the July 26 Movement in 1961, Roca became an official of the Cuban government.

14. "New Rise of the World Revolution," *International Information Bulletin*, October 1968, p. 45.

15. **OLAS** (Organización Latinoamericana de Solidaridad—Organization of Latin American Solidarity) was founded in Havana in January 1966 and held its first conference, also in Havana, July 31 to August 10, 1967. The conference was dominated by the Castroist and guerrillaist tendencies and was sharply critical of several of the pro-Moscow Communist parties in Latin America, particularly the Venezuelan CP. OLAS was originally presented as a coordinating committee for revolutionary work in Latin America and even as a disciplined international body. But the death of Che Guevara in Bolivia two months after the conference adjourned, followed by further setbacks to other guerrilla attempts, reduced the OLAS to a modest publishing and information service.

16. "New Rise of the World Revolution," *International Information Bulletin*, October 1968, pp. 41-42.

17. The concept of a **transitional program**, outlined in the document adopted at the Founding Congress of the Fourth International, is of demands that form a bridge between issues that people can be mobilized

to fight for immediately and demands that move toward placing control over production and over the government in the hands of the organized working class. Examples include the demand for revealing business secrets ("open the books"), the right of the people to vote on the country's involvement in a war, the right of workers to organize their own self-defense formations through their unions and parties, and the demand that wages be automatically increased to compensate for inflation (the "escalator clause"). Transitional demands in general cannot be fully granted under capitalism. They differ from a minimum program of democratic reforms by being open-ended in the extent of the powers they seek to transfer from the present ruling class to the workers' movement. At the opposite pole they differ from simple calls for socialist revolution or the organization of soviets by finding a basis in the present consciousness and objective needs of the masses around which organization or at least educational work can take place as the necessary bridge to take the workers, through their own experiences, from acceptance of the present society to readiness to overthrow it and institute their own power.

18. **Livio Maitan** (1923-) took part in the Italian Resistance during World War II. Condemned by a Fascist court in 1944, he escaped to Switzerland. After the war he joined the Italian Socialist Party youth and then, in 1948, the Fourth International. He supported the International Secretariat in the 1953-63 split in the International, and has been a member of the United Secretariat since the Reunification Congress. He is a leader of the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (Revolutionary Communist Groups), the Italian section of the Fourth International, and is a professor at the Roman Institute of Sociology. He took particular responsibility for the Fourth International's Latin American work in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

19. *International Information Bulletin*, no. 2, January 1969, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America (1968-1972)*, *International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIDB)* (New York: Socialist Workers Party, January 1973), pp. 15-16.

20. The **First International**, or International Workingmen's Association, was founded in London in 1864. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were its principal leaders, but it was heterogeneous in composition, including reformist British trade union leaders and the anarchist followers of Pierre Proudhon and Mikhail Bakunin as well as the Marxists. It went into decline after the defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871 and moved its headquarters to the United States the following year. It was dissolved at a conference in Philadelphia in 1876. The **Second International** was founded in Paris in 1889. It was the first truly international mass workers' organization, although it had a less definitely revolutionary character than the First International. By the outbreak of World War I the conservative tendencies within it had become predominant and most of its sections supported their own capitalist governments in the war, leading to the collapse of the International. It was revived in 1919 as a wholly reformist organization. The **Third or Communist International**

was founded in 1919 by Lenin and Trotsky following the successful Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917. In the period of its first four congresses the Comintern was the most advanced of any world workers' organization up to its time, instituting the concepts of revolutionary centralism and the building of professional combat parties for the first time on a world scale. It was captured by the Stalin faction as a consequence of the rise of the reactionary privileged bureaucracy in the Soviet Union after 1923 and was dissolved by Stalin in 1943 as a gesture toward his bourgeois allies in World War II.

21. **Granma**, named for the vessel in which Castro and his band of July 26 fighters landed in Cuba from exile to begin the guerrilla war in 1956, is the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party. This quotation is from the English-language *Granma Weekly Review*, year 3, no. 52, December 29, 1968.

Report on the 1969 World Congress of the Fourth International

1. *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, p. 666.

2. **Michel Pablo** (1911-) joined the Archio-Marxists, a Greek communist group close to the Trotskyist movement, in 1928. He represented the Greek Trotskyists at the Founding Congress of the Fourth International in 1938. He was elected to the European Secretariat established by an underground conference in France in February 1944, and was elected secretary of the International Secretariat when it was reestablished after World War II at a preconference in March 1946. He led the IS in the 1953-54 split with the International Committee of the Fourth International, which was supported by the SWP. He became the leader of a minority in the IS faction in 1961. He participated in the Reunification Congress, but was expelled from the Fourth International in 1965 for violations of discipline. He later led the Alliance Marxiste Révolutionnaire, which fused with the centrist Parti Socialiste Unifié in France in 1975. In 1977 he left the PSU and founded the Tendence Marxiste Révolutionnaire Internationale. He is also known under the name Michel Raptis. **Pierre Frank** (1905-) joined the French Communist Party in 1925 and was expelled as an Oppositionist in 1929. He became a founder of the French Trotskyist movement and served as Trotsky's secretary in 1932-33. He was expelled from the Trotskyist movement in 1935, and, after a brief reunification, again in 1936. He had applied to rejoin when World War II broke out, and he went into exile in England, where he was interned for three years. He was elected to the International Secretariat of the Fourth International at the first postwar congress, sided with Pablo and the IS faction during the years of the split (1953-63), and has been a member of the United Secretariat since 1963. He is also a leader of the French section. **Ernest Mandel** (1923-) joined the Belgian section of the Fourth International under the German

occupation at the beginning of World War II. He was elected to the Central Committee in July 1941 and worked in the underground during the war. He was captured three times by the Nazis, escaped twice, and was deported to Germany shortly before the end of the war. He was elected to the International Secretariat at the international preconference in March 1946. He sided with Pablo in the 1953-54 split. Mandel helped to prepare the Reunification Congress. He has been a member of the United Secretariat since 1963, and is widely known throughout the world for his writings on Marxist economic theory.

3. The 1939-40 split in the SWP was precipitated by Stalin's signing of a nonaggression pact with Nazi Germany in August 1939 and the German-Soviet invasion of Poland the following month. This led to a wave of outrage against the Soviet Union in American liberal circles which was reflected inside the SWP by the formation of a faction led by James Burnham that proposed to repudiate the party's position of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union in a war with a capitalist country. Burnham won to his position two founding leaders of the American Trotskyist movement, Max Shachtman and Martin Abern. This group split from the SWP in May 1940 and established the Workers Party, which dissolved into the Socialist Party in 1958. At the time of the 1940 split, Burnham, Shachtman, and Abern took with them about 40 percent of the SWP membership.

4. The call for a **political revolution** was put forward by Trotsky for the Soviet Union after the failure of the Stalin-led Communist International to mount any resistance to Hitler's assumption of power in Germany in 1933. Its aim was to have the Soviet working class overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy in order to restore democracy and the revolutionary internationalist struggle for a world socialist order. It was distinguished from a **social revolution**, such as had taken place in Russia in 1917-18, because the revolution would be limited to a democratizing of the party and government hierarchy and of industrial management. No class of proprietors needed to be expropriated and no new form of property needed to be instituted different from the nationalized planned economy that had been created after the October 1917 revolution. By extension, this demand has since been applied to other bureaucratized workers' states.

5. The statement Hansen is referring to appears in the document "The Sino-Soviet Conflict and the Situation in the USSR and the Other Workers' States," adopted at the Reunification Congress. Following a listing of the democratic rights needed in a healthy workers' state, the document stated that in China, "these conquests cannot be won except through an antibureaucratic struggle on a scale massive enough to bring about a qualitative change in the political form of government" (*Fourth International* [Paris], no. 17, October-December 1963, p. 64).

6. *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, pp. 667-88.

7. At the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International in 1963 the main resolution, "Dynamics of World Revolution Today," distinguished between **three sectors of the world revolution** in which

socialists face different conditions: the imperialist countries, the colonial and neocolonial capitalist countries, and the workers' states. (See *Dynamics of World Revolution Today*, Will Reissner, ed. [New York: Pathfinder Press, 1974], pp. 29ff.)

8. In 1964 a military coup in **Brazil** overthrew President João Goulart, who had advocated a series of radical constitutional reforms. Under the rule of the generals, political parties were dissolved in 1965 and Marshal Costa e Silva assumed one-man rule in 1968. The defeat in **Indonesia** occurred in September 1965 when, allegedly in retaliation for the assassination of six high-ranking officers, the Indonesian army launched a bloodbath to wipe out the Indonesian Communist Party. Between 500,000 and 1,000,000 people were killed in this massacre. General Suharto took power, gradually removing nationalist President Sukarno, whom the CP had supported, and reestablishing close ties with the United States.

9. Beginning early in 1952, most of the European Trotskyist organizations affiliated with the International Secretariat headed by Pablo dissolved their public organizations and joined the mass Social Democratic or Communist parties. Their aim was to win over a significant section of the ranks of these parties and eventually reestablish open Trotskyist parties. The **entry tactic** was pursued into the late 1960s in a number of countries. Nowhere did it succeed in winning any large numbers from the party that had been entered.

10. John Gerassi, "The Spectre of Che Guevara," *Ramparts*, October 1967, pp. 27-28, 30.

11. The **International Executive Committee (IEC)**, elected by the world congress, is the highest body of the Fourth International between congresses.

12. **Luis de la Puente Uceda** was a prominent leader of the Partido Aprista Peruano (PAP—Peruvian Aprista Party) of Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, a one-time revolutionary nationalist party that had moved far to the right in the 1950s. In 1959 de la Puente broke with the PAP to set up the pro-Cuban APRA Rebelde. (The term *Aprista* and the initials APRA are taken from the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana [People's Revolutionary American Alliance] founded by Haya de la Torre in Mexico in 1924. The PAP was formed in 1930.) In 1965 the APRA Rebelde changed its name to the MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria—Movement of the Revolutionary Left) and began a guerrilla campaign. De la Puente was captured and killed near Cuzco in October 1965. **Guillermo Lobatón** was the MIR commander for the central area in Peru. He also disappeared in 1965.

13. The original draft and the amended version both appeared in *International Information Bulletin*, no. 5, March 1969 (New York: Socialist Workers Party). An analysis by Joseph Hansen of the amendments, with a dual-column reprint of the original draft and the proposed amendments, appears in *International Information Bulletin*, no. 4, June 1970.

14. "Report on the 'Cultural Revolution' in China," *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, pp. 706-14.

15. **P'eng Shu-tse** (1895-) was a founding member of the Chinese Communist Party and was a member of its Political Bureau during the Chinese revolution of 1925-27. In 1929 he and Ch'en Tu-hsiu, former general secretary of the CCP, founded the Chinese Trotskyist movement. Since the end of 1948 he has lived in exile, and has contributed to the leadership of the Fourth International.

16. **Liu Shao-ch'i** (1898-1969) was a central leader of the Chinese Communist Party from the late 1920s on; he was chairman and head of state of the Chinese People's Republic 1959-68. He was attacked by the Maoists during the Cultural Revolution as a "capitalist-roader" and removed from office. Rumors of his death were confirmed in 1974.

17. **Capa** was a pseudonym used by Nahuel Moreno, a central leader of the Argentine Trotskyist movement.

18. **Ernest Germain** was a pseudonym of Ernest Mandel.

19. "Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International," *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, pp. 723-32. Reprinted in Leon Trotsky, *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, 3rd ed. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1977).

20. The **founding congress of the Ligue Communiste**, the name then of the French section of the Fourth International, was held in Germany in early April 1969. Many of the founding members had been members of two Trotskyist groups that were banned after the May-June strikes in 1968—the JCR (Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire—Revolutionary Communist Youth) and the PCI (Parti Communiste Internationaliste—Internationalist Communist Party). They decided to hold the congress outside the country rather than risk an attack by the French government. The congress launched the presidential campaign of **Alain Krivine** (1942-), a founder of the JCR and a leader of the 1968 student revolt. The report on the expulsion from France of some international supporters of this campaign is "Tariq Ali, Livio Maitan Expelled from France," *Intercontinental Press*, June 9, 1969, pp. 562-63.

A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America

1. *International Information Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), no. 2, January 1969. Reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America (1968-1972)*, *International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIDB)* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), January 1973, p. 15.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

4. **Guido "Inti" Peredo Leigue** (1927-1969) was a Central Committee member of the Bolivian CP who broke with the party to join Che Guevara's guerrillas. He was one of five survivors of the defeat in which Che and one of Inti's brothers, "Coco," died. Inti Peredo rebuilt the ELN

(Ejército de Liberación Nacional—National Liberation Army), and was killed in La Paz during a police raid. The *Intercontinental Press* articles include “New Guerrilla Front Crushed, Police Claim,” September 15, 1969, p. 796; “Guerrilla Fighters Seized in Nationwide Raids,” September 22, 1969, p. 820; “Commandante Guido ‘Inti’ Peredo Leigue,” October 6, 1969, p. 876; and “Release the Political Prisoners!” November 24, 1969, p. 1048.

5. Quoted in *Intercontinental Press*, March 2, 1970. In the terminology of Che Guevara and other practitioners of rural guerrilla warfare as a strategy, a **foco** is a definite, more or less permanent, rural base camp for the guerrillas, as distinguished from permanently mobile columns or urban guerrillas. A long debate took place among the Castroist groups in Latin America in which the *foquistas* held that even a small group could and should maintain a permanent base camp if it was in a sufficiently isolated region with natural protection from sudden military attacks.

6. *International Information Bulletin*, no. 3, February 1969. Reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 28, and in this volume.

7. The **Argentine section** had been called the PRT (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores—Revolutionary Workers Party); after the PRT split in 1968, the groups were identified by the names of their newspapers—*El Combatiente* (Combatant) and *La Verdad* (Truth). In October 1969, sixteen members of the PRT (*Combatiente*) were arrested for bombings in Tucumán, imprisoned in Rosario, and tortured. In May 1970 seventeen more were arrested in Rosario, charged with assaults on police stations, train robbery, and illegal arms possession. The accounts in *Intercontinental Press* are “Argentine Police Announce Arrest of Guerrillas,” June 1, 1970, p. 516, and “Call for Protest to Help Jailed Guerrillas” by Livio Maitan, June 8, 1970, p. 548.

8. *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, p. 720 (reprinted as Appendix I to this volume).

9. Livio Maitan, “Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America,” *Intercontinental Press*, April 20, 1970, p. 352. **Juan Velasco Alvarado** (1910-) led the Peruvian junta that deposed President Fernando Belaúnde Terry in 1968. Velasco’s military regime seized the oilfields and launched a land reform. **Alfredo Ovando Candia** (1918-) was the Bolivian general who directed the campaign against Che Guevara. He seized the presidency in 1969 and nationalized the U.S.-controlled oil industry.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 353.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*, p. 359.

14. *Ibid.*

15. “The Ovando Government and the Bolivian Situation,” *Intercontinental Press*, April 13, 1970. **COB** stands for Central Obrera Boliviana (Bolivian Workers Federation), the national federation of the Bolivian labor movement, founded during the 1952 revolution.

16. An English translation of this statement, "Bolivian Trotskyists Hail Siglo Veinte Congress," was published in *Intercontinental Press*, May 11, 1970, pp. 432-34.

17. "The Ovando Government and the Bolivian Situation," *Intercontinental Press*, April 13, 1970, p. 336.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Livio Maítan, "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America," *Intercontinental Press*, April 20, 1970, p. 359, quoting from "Resolution on Latin America," *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, p. 720.

20. "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle," *Intercontinental Press*, April 20, 1970, p. 360.

21. Héctor Béjar Rivera (1935-) joined the CP of Peru as a youth; he was later on its Central Committee and edited its official newspaper. He was expelled in 1958 because he opposed the party's electoralism and collaboration with the Peruvian oligarchy. In 1962 he helped organize the Ejército Nacional de Liberación (National Liberation Army) and participated in armed actions. After being arrested in Lima in 1966, while in prison awaiting trial, he wrote his balance sheet, *Perú 1965: Apuntes Sobre una Experiencia Guerrillera* (Peru 1965: Notes on a Guerrilla Experience) (Havana: Casa de las Américas, 1969). For Joseph Hansen's review of the book, see *Intercontinental Press*, January 19, 1970, pp. 44-48. Monthly Review Press, New York, published an English translation of Béjar's book in 1970. Béjar capitulated to the military regime and got a job with the Velasco government after his amnesty in December 1970.

22. *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, p. 722.

23. Douglas Bravo was a member of the Political Bureau of the Venezuelan CP until 1966, when he split over the question of guerrilla warfare. Since 1961 he had also been a central leader of the FLN/FALN (Frente de Liberación Nacional / Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional—National Liberation Front / Armed Forces of National Liberation). As the CP drew back from its support to the Venezuelan guerrilla campaign, it tried to use its control over the FLN, for which the FALN was nominally only a subordinate armed expression, to strangle the guerrilla movement. In 1966 Bravo set up the Comando Unico (Unified Command), which placed control over the FLN/FALN in the field. He was expelled from the CP in 1967. Bravo was a supporter of the Cuban line but criticized theories of exclusively rural guerrilla war such as those of Régis Debray for underestimating the problem of organizing the working class and the peasantry. His criticisms of the Cuban leadership for attempting to mechanically repeat the Cuban pattern were published in an interview translated in *Intercontinental Press*, June 8, 1970. The FLN/FALN went into decline after 1970. Bravo's movement decided in 1974 to halt minority armed actions on political grounds.

24. *Intercontinental Press*, April 20, 1970, p. 357.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 356.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 359.

27. **Aníbal Escalante Dellundé** had been the secretary-general of the Stalinist Cuban Popular Socialist Party. He became national organizer of the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI) when it was formed in 1961 by the fusion of the PSP with the July 26 Movement and the Revolutionary Student Directorate. He was publicly censured and removed from his post in 1962 for using his position to organize a bureaucratic clique. (The ORI later became the United Party of Socialist Revolution of Cuba; in 1965 it changed its name to the Cuban Communist Party.) In 1968 Escalante was again censured for organizing a "micro-faction" opposing Cuba's critical stance toward Soviet policies in Latin America and Vietnam, the armed-struggle line in Latin America, and reliance on political motivation ("moral incentives") in organizing production in Cuba. He was charged with establishing secret links with the Soviet and other embassies of the Stalinized workers' states. He was sentenced to fifteen years in prison.

28. The **Fair Play for Cuba Committee** was founded in April 1960. Its initial sponsors included Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, C. Wright Mills, Robert Taber, and Robert F. Williams. Its participants included members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance, as well as radical pacifists. They worked in cooperation with members of the July 26 Movement in the United States. In 1961 it had over 7,000 members, with twenty-one chapters in American cities, four in Canada, and groups on over forty campuses. The FPCC published materials and organized educational meetings and demonstrations in support of the Cuban revolution.

29. In 1961 several **Argentine Trotskyists** arrived in Peru at the request of the Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyism (SLATO—Secretariado Latinoamericano del Trotskismo Ortodoxo), a coordinating body formed in 1957 and aligned with the International Committee in the faction fight in the Fourth International. The most important effect of these reinforcements was to help in the creation of the FIR (Frente de la Izquierda Revolucionaria—Revolutionary Left Front) in December 1961. The FIR united the Trotskyist party, the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR—Revolutionary Workers Party), formed in 1947, with several other revolutionary groups, first in Lima and Cuzco and later on a national level. The FIR became the Peruvian affiliate of the International Committee and, in 1963, the Peruvian section of the reunified Fourth International. **Daniel Alberto Pereyra Pérez** worked in both Lima and Cuzco and helped to establish the FIR. In the spring of 1962, however, he split to form his own urban guerrilla organization, called the Túpac Amaru. He was captured later that year following a bank expropriation and imprisoned until 1967. Upon returning to Argentina, he became a leader of the PRT (*Combatiente*). He attended the 1969 world congress, where he argued in support of the guerrilla warfare line. He broke with the PRT (*Combatiente*) before it split from the world Trotskyist movement and is today a leader of a small group in Argentina that claims adherence to the Fourth International. **Eduardo Creus**

González (1928-) joined the Argentine Trotskyist movement in 1950, was a union militant, and served a prison sentence in the late 1950s. He went with Pereyra into the Túpac Amaru group in 1962, was captured in 1963, and was imprisoned with Hugo Blanco at El Frontón prison until he was amnestied in 1971. On his release he returned to Argentina and joined the PRT (*La Verdad*). **Nahuel Moreno** (Hugo Bressano) has been a central leader of Argentine Trotskyism since the late 1940s. He was a founding member of the Partido Obrero de la Revolución Socialista (PORS—Workers Party of the Socialist Revolution) in 1941, which was recognized briefly as the Argentine section of the Fourth International. The PORS disintegrated by 1942 and various small Argentine Trotskyist groups emerged in the postwar period. These consolidated into two basic currents: the Grupo Cuarta Internacional (GCI—Fourth International Group), led by Juan Posadas and recognized as the official section at the 1951 world congress of the Fourth International, and the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR—Revolutionary Workers Party), led by Moreno, which was denied recognition. When the split in the International took place in 1953-54, Posadas supported Pablo's International Secretariat and Moreno supported the International Committee. The POR was dissolved in 1954 into the pro-Perón Partido Socialista de la Revolución Nacional (PSRN—Socialist Party of National Revolution). The Moreno tendency became independent again in 1956, helping to found the Movimiento de Agrupaciones Obreras (MAO—Movement of Workers' Groups), known by the name of its newspaper, *Palabra Obrera* (Workers' Voice). This became the strongest Trotskyist current in the southern part of Latin America in the early 1960s, particularly through its work in SLATO. *Palabra Obrera* was recognized as the official Trotskyist group in Argentina at the 1965 world congress of the Fourth International. That same year it merged with the Frente Revolucionario Indoamericanista Popular (FRIP—People's Indo-American Revolutionary Front) to form the PRT (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores—Revolutionary Workers Party). When this party split early in 1968, Moreno became the central leader of the PRT (*La Verdad*), later renamed the PST (Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores—Socialist Workers Party). Moreno was a central leader of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. He developed differences with the majority of the faction over the events in Portugal in 1975, left the LTF, and organized a new international faction, the Bolshevik Tendency, in February 1976. The Bolshevik Tendency maintained its existence after the dissolution of the LTF and the IMT.

30. **Gerry Healy** (1915-) was a leader of the British Trotskyist movement and of the International Committee of the Fourth International. He took the position that Cuba is not a workers' state because the revolution was not led by a Leninist party. He remained outside the reunified Fourth International as head of the sectarian Socialist Labour League (since 1973 called the Workers Revolutionary Party). For Joseph Hansen's polemic against Healy's position on Cuba, see "Cuba—the Acid Test: A Reply to the Ultraleft Sectarians," in

Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1978), pp. 132-85.

31. **Angel A. Bengochea** was an editor of *Palabra Obrera* (Workers' Voice). Upon his return to Argentina from a trip to Cuba he raised a proposal for undertaking "immediate direct action" and resigned from the group in 1963. In July 1964 he and four of his followers were killed in an explosion in an apartment where they were making bombs.

32. *International Information Bulletin*, no. 2, January 1969, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 15.

33. *Ibid.*

In Defense of the Leninist Strategy of Party Building

1. Both of these articles were published in English translation in the *International Information Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), no. 2, January 1971. Livio Maitan's article was dated September 30, 1970. The article by Ernest Germain and Martine Knoeller was dated November 1970. Martine Knoeller is a pseudonym for Gisela Mandel. She was active in the West German SDS (Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund—German Socialist Student Federation) in the mid-1960s and was a member of the Political Bureau of the Belgian section of the Fourth International. The page citations given for the Maitan and Germain-Knoeller articles have been adapted to the more accessible reprint edition, *Discussion on Latin America (1968-1972)*, *International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIDB)* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), January 1973.

2. See the previous article in this volume.

3. **Karl Kautsky** (1854-1938) was a leader of the German Social Democratic Party and a founder of the Second International in 1889. He was the most outstanding Marxist theorist of the International between 1895 and 1914. Kautsky did not immediately become a procapitalist patriot in World War I, as many of the leaders of the Second International did. He adopted a centrist and pacifist stand. His politics were fully defined when he opposed the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. **Rodney Arismendi** (1913-) joined the Uruguayan Communist Party in 1931. He headed the Communist Youth Federation (1936-39) and was elected to the party's Executive Committee (Politburo) in 1944. He has been the party's first secretary since 1955. Arismendi cultivated the image of the most left wing of the pro-Moscow CP leaders in Latin America. He was elected one of the four vice-presidents of the OLAS conference in Havana in the summer of 1967, where he gave verbal support to the guerrilla warfare position. He was arrested in Uruguay in May 1974 and exiled to Moscow in January 1975.

4. Maitan, "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America—Defense of an Orientation and a Method," *International Information Bulletin*, no. 2, January 1971, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*. p. 87.

5. The reference here is to the English version of the Fourth Russian edition of Lenin's *Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers).

6. "Guerrilla Warfare," *Collected Works*, vol. 11, pp. 213-14, emphasis in original.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 220, emphasis in original.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 221, emphasis in original.

9. *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

10. "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising," *ibid.*, p. 172.

11. The **Russian 1905 revolution** was precipitated by the Russian defeat in the Russo-Japanese War. It began on January 9, 1905, when tsarist troops fired on a peaceful march in St. Petersburg which was seeking to present a petition to the government. Massive strikes led to the formation of the St. Petersburg Soviet in October. That same month the tsar issued a manifesto promising universal suffrage and the election of a Duma or national assembly. This Duma, which was to have purely consultative powers, was known as the Bulygin Duma, from tsarist minister of the interior A. G. Bulygin, who headed the commission establishing it. **The elections to the Bulygin Duma were boycotted** by the socialists and it was never convened. In December the tsar crushed the St. Petersburg Soviet, marking the real end of the 1905 revolution. The following March, elections were held for what is called the First Duma. The Bolsheviks and other socialist parties again boycotted—a decision that Lenin would later call a mistake. The majority in the 1906 Duma went to the antitsarist liberals of the Constitutional Democratic Party (Cadets). The tsar dispersed the Duma in the summer of 1906 to prevent the formation of a Cadet ministry. When new elections were called in 1907 the Bolsheviks ran candidates.

12. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 13, p. 29.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25, emphasis in original.

14. **Leonid Krassin** (1870-1926) joined the Russian revolutionary movement in the 1890s. He was an engineer by training and used his business connections to run an underground Bolshevik printshop in Baku before the 1905 revolution. He helped to organize the armed expropriations following 1905. His duties in that period included running a laboratory where bombs were made. In later years he was a Soviet diplomat.

15. **Joseph Pilsudski** (1867-1935) was exiled to Siberia as a student for an alleged attempt on the life of Alexander III. On his return in 1892, he helped found the Polish Socialist Party. He became the chief of the newly created Polish republic in 1918, and in 1920 led his army against the Soviet forces in the Ukraine. He retired in 1923, but led a coup in May 1926 that returned him to power and was dictator of Poland from various posts until his death.

16. **Fyodor Nikitich Samoilov** (1882-1952) joined the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) in 1903. He was a deputy to the Fourth Duma and member of the Bolshevik parliamentary group. He served on

the Bashkir Military Revolutionary Committee during the Russian civil war in 1919-20.

17. The reference here is to the **December 1905 insurrection in Moscow**. This took place after the dispersal of the St. Petersburg Soviet, when the revolution nationally was already on the wane. A peaceful strike, called by the Moscow Soviet with the support of the trade unions and all the Left parties, began on December 7. On December 9 troops attacked the crowd in Strestnaya Square and the people spontaneously set up barricades. By the next day a massive spontaneous insurrection began, combining crowds engaged in barricade fighting and the organization of armed detachments. The government had contained the fighting by December 15 and crushed the last mass resistance on December 17.

18. The **Stockholm Congress** of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party was held April 23-May 8, 1906. It was the first joint congress of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks since the split of the two factions in 1903. The Mensheviks were in the majority at Stockholm and the unified Central Committee elected at the congress contained seven Mensheviks and three Bolsheviks plus two representatives each from the Polish Social Democratic Party and the Jewish Bund and one representative of the Latvian Social Democrats.

19. See "Report on the Unity Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.—A Letter to the St. Petersburg Workers," May 1906, in Lenin's *Collected Works*, vol. 10, pp. 317-82.

20. The **London Congress** of the RSDLP was held May 13-June 1, 1907. This time the Bolsheviks were slightly stronger than the Mensheviks, but other factions at the congress still left the Bolsheviks as a minority on the Central Committee.

21. The Second Duma opened in March 1907. Almost a two-thirds majority were opposed to the monarchy, including 65 Social Democrats, out of 516 deputies, while the protsarist deputies numbered only 52. The tsar decreed the dissolution on the Second Duma in a manifesto of June 3, 1907.

22. **Mikhail Stepanovich Olminsky** (1863-1933) was exiled to Siberia in 1898 as a revolutionary populist; there he joined the Social Democrats. A close associate of Lenin in the years 1905-17, he took an active part in the October 1917 revolution and later became known as a Bolshevik historian.

23. Leon Trotsky, *Stalin: An Appraisal of the Man and His Influence* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1942), pp. 95-99. The manuscript for this book was unfinished at the time of Trotsky's assassination in August 1940. The bracketed insertions, with the exception of the one signed by Joseph Hansen, are by the translator, Charles Malamuth, who edited the manuscript for publication after Trotsky's death.

24. On June 12, 1907, a Bolshevik armed detachment commanded by the Armenian revolutionist "Kamo" Petrosyan intercepted a convoy of Cossacks in Erivan Square in **Tiflis**. Three members of the convoy were killed and the revolutionists escaped unhurt with 341,000 rubles. Kamo

was arrested shortly afterward in Berlin and spent most of the next ten years in prison.

25. **Boris Souvarine** (1893-) was a founder of the French CP and one of the first serious biographers of Stalin. He was expelled from the French party as a Trotskyist in 1924, but broke with Trotsky in 1929 and in the 1930s abandoned Marxism.

26. Trotsky, *Stalin*, pp. 109-10. **Koba** was a pseudonym used by Stalin in his early years in the Bolshevik Party. He was deeply involved in the "expropriations" in the Caucasus in the 1906-07 period.

27. Leon Trotsky, "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," in *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, 3rd ed. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1977), p. 125.

28. *Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

29. *Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

31. The quotation is from the document "For Early Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement," adopted by the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party on March 1, 1963, *SWP Discussion Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), vol. 24, no. 9, April 1963. This document was approved by the overwhelming majority of the delegates to the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International in June 1963. The text is available in *Dynamics of World Revolution Today*, Will Reissner, ed. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1974), p. 19.

32. *International Information Bulletin*, no. 2, January 1971, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, January 1973, p. 89.

33. The **VPR** (Vanguarda Popular Revolucionária) was one of five or six guerrilla-oriented revolutionary groups active in Brazil in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It effectively ceased to function after six of its members were killed in a police raid near Recife in January 1973. The German ambassador to Brazil, **Ehrenfried von Holleben**, was kidnapped in Rio de Janeiro on June 11, 1970, by representatives of the VPR and of the ALN (Ação Libertadora Nacional—Action for National Liberation), the guerrilla organization founded by **Carlos Marighella** (1911-1969). Marighella had been a member of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) for forty years, a member of its Executive Commission (Politburo), and the head of its organization in São Paulo, Brazil's most important industrial city. He went into opposition to the party leadership in 1966 over the question of guerrilla warfare, attended the OLAS conference in Havana in 1967 against the will of his party leadership, and was expelled in the fall of 1967. At that time he formed the Partido Comunista Brasileiro Revolucionário (PCBR—Revolutionary Communist Party of Brazil) and in 1968 the ALN. Marighella rapidly became the most famous theorist of urban guerrilla warfare in Latin America. He was killed in a police ambush in São Paulo, November 4, 1969.

34. **Favelados**—residents of the shantytowns.

35. **Régis Debray** (1940-) studied philosophy under Louis Althusser at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris and in 1965 went to

Cuba, where he taught philosophy at the University of Havana. In 1967 he published the book *Revolution in the Revolution?* (New York: Monthly Review Press), which defended the strategy of rural guerrilla warfare, with special stress on the establishment of permanent base camps—*focos*—in relatively remote regions. It is this strategy that has come to be known as Debrayism. Debray accompanied Che Guevara's guerrilla band in Bolivia, was captured before Che, and sentenced to thirty years in prison. He was pardoned and released in December 1970. Livio Maitan wrote several articles criticizing Debray's theories, including "Major Problems of the Latin-American Revolution—A Reply to Régis Debray," *International Socialist Review* (New York), vol. 28, no. 5, September-October 1967.

36. The **Tupamaros**, or **Movimiento de Liberación Nacional** (National Liberation Movement), of Uruguay, named for the eighteenth-century Peruvian revolutionist Túpac Amaru, were formed in 1962 by Raúl Sendic. They carried out their first raid in 1963 and have since operated as an urban guerrilla group, primarily in the Uruguayan capital, Montevideo. They won international headlines in 1970-71 by kidnapping a number of foreign nationals in Uruguay, but suffered severe reprisals when the army took over counter guerrilla operations from the police in 1972-73. Most of the Tupamaro leaders, including Raúl Sendic, have been in prison since 1973 and the group's activity has been minimal since 1975.

37. "Thirty Questions to a Tupamaro," a 1968 statement quoted by Jean Stubbs, "Uruguay: A Role for Urban Guerrillas?" *International* (London), vol. 1, no. 3, January-February 1971, p. 38.

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Ibid.*

40. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

41. **Ciro Bustos** is also known under the name **Roberto Bustos**, and is an Argentine artist. **General Roberto Marcelo Levingston** (1920-) came to power in June 1970 in a military coup against General Juan Carlos Onganía, who had lost the confidence of the Argentine officer corps. Levingston was himself deposed in March 1971 and replaced by General Alejandro A. Lanusse.

42. **Emiliano Zapata** (1879-1919) led a peasant army in the Mexican revolution which overthrew the Porfirio Díaz dictatorship and brought the Republican leader Francisco I. Madero to power in 1911. Zapata's troops carried out large-scale land seizures and controlled a major part of south central Mexico. Zapata went into opposition against Madero when the new government refused to distribute land to the peasants. He joined forces with **Francisco Villa** (1877-1923) against the conservative Huerta regime after Madero's assassination in 1913. Zapata and Villa then fought against the constitutionalist regime of Venustiano Carranza, which succeeded Huerta in 1914 but refused to implement a land reform. Following the peasant rebels' brief occupation of Mexico City in December 1914, Zapata withdrew to his stronghold in Morelos, where he was finally murdered by an emissary of Carranza. Villa had been an outlaw

in northern Mexico and participated in the revolution of 1910-11 against Díaz. Villa's peasant army gained control of much of northern Mexico, but was defeated by Mexican federal troops in 1915. He withdrew to northern Mexico, eluded a U.S. expeditionary force under General Pershing in 1916-17, and was assassinated in 1923. **Augusto César Sandino** (1895-1934) took part in the 1926 revolution in Nicaragua against the government of Adolfo Díaz and Emiliano Chamorro. After a brief period of stability in which elections were promised, U.S. troops intervened in 1927 to suppress the mass movement. Sandino led a guerrilla campaign (1927-33) against the U.S. marines. After the U.S. forces withdrew, he accepted an invitation to meet General Anastasio Somoza, and was seized and executed.

43. This document appears earlier in this volume.

44. The **Weatherman** group originated at the June 18-22, 1969, convention of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), held in Chicago. This was the SDS split convention, where the largest U.S. student organization of the 1960s fragmented. The main factions formed at the convention were the Worker-Student Alliance caucus, led by the Progressive Labor Party, and the Revolutionary Youth Movement caucus, which in turn broke into the RYM II and Weatherman groups. The Weatherman faction won a majority. On October 8-11, 1969, Weatherman SDS sponsored a series of confrontationist demonstrations in Chicago called the "Days of Rage." In response to indictments handed down against its leaders after the "Days of Rage" the Weatherman group went underground, and for several years carried on a sporadic campaign of antigovernment bombings.

45. The **Black Panther Party** was founded in Oakland, California, in 1966 by Huey P. Newton (1942-) and Bobby Seale (1936-). In the late 1960s the party advocated the use of armed guerrilla actions in the struggle for Black liberation. It became an object of police infiltration and provocation, and a large number of BPP members and leaders were killed by police, most notably the unprovoked killing of Illinois Panther leader Fred Hampton in his Chicago apartment in 1969. The BPP went into decline after 1970 and suffered several splits.

46. *International Information Bulletin*, no. 6, July 1970, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 74. (This appears as the previous article in this volume.)

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*

49. *International Information Bulletin*, no. 2, January 1971, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 82.

50. *International Information Bulletin*, no. 2, January 1969, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, pp. 15-16.

51. "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 74, and in this volume.

52. "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 82.

53. **Robin Blackburn** (1941-) has been a lecturer at the London School of Economics and at the University of Havana. He is a long-time member of the editorial board of the British *New Left Review*. He was a leading ideologist of the British New Left until he joined the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International, in May 1972, a year after this article by Hansen was published.

54. The **Young Socialist Alliance** was founded in Philadelphia in 1960 as an outgrowth of the *Young Socialist* newspaper, which began publication in 1957. It is an independent youth organization that is in political solidarity with the Socialist Workers Party.

55. **Philip F. Berrigan** (1923-), a Roman Catholic priest, and his brother **Daniel Berrigan** (1921-), a Jesuit priest, are both long-time pacifists and civil rights activists. Both were convicted in 1970 for destroying selective service files in Catonsville, Maryland, in 1968. They were sentenced respectively to four and three years. While they were in prison, Federal Bureau of Investigation director J. Edgar Hoover, in November 1970, accused them, along with Sister Elizabeth McAlister and several others, of plotting to kidnap Henry Kissinger, then President Nixon's national security adviser and later secretary of state, and of planning to blow up the heating systems in government buildings in Washington. Seven persons were brought to trial on these charges in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in April 1972 (Daniel Berrigan was named as an unindicted co-conspirator and not tried). The jury was deadlocked and the charges were later dropped. Daniel was paroled in January 1972; Philip was released in December 1972.

56. **Timothy Leary** (1920-) was a Harvard professor of psychology who began experimenting with LSD and in the mid-1960s proclaimed a semireligion based on hallucinogenic drugs. Leary became an immediate hero of the drug-centered counterculture, which drew the attention of the police and led to several arrests. Sentenced to a long term for possession of marijuana, Leary was freed from a prison in San Luis Obispo, California, in September 1970 in a daring escape organized by the Weatherman group. They provided him with a passport that got him to Algiers.

57. The **Black Panther Party** split into two public factions in February 1971. A majority, led by Huey P. Newton, the party's minister of defense, and David Hilliard, the chief of staff, retained control of the BPP Oakland headquarters. The minority, including the New York organization, was led by Eldridge Cleaver (1935-), author of *Soul on Ice* and the party's minister of information, then in exile in Algiers. Each side accused the other of misuse of party funds and of murdering or of plotting to murder members of the opposing faction. The Newton faction rapidly abandoned the ultraleft rhetoric that had been its hallmark and turned toward reformist social work. The Cleaver faction soon disintegrated.

58. **Bernardine Dohrn** (1942-) is a graduate of the University of Chicago Law School and was assistant executive secretary of the National Lawyers Guild. In 1968 she joined SDS and became one of its

national leaders. She was a central leader of the Weatherman faction from its formation in 1969, went underground in the fall of 1969, and has not been seen in public since. On March 6, 1970, a **Manhattan town-house** belonging to the parents of Cathy Wilkerson, a Weather Underground leader, was demolished when an accident occurred in a Weatherman bomb laboratory in the basement. Ted Gold, Diana Oughton, and Terry Robbins, all Weatherman activists, were killed in the blast. The statement by Bernardine Dohrn from underground, "Changing Weather: New Morning," was published in several local radical newspapers at the end of 1970. It is reprinted in the book *From the Movement Toward Revolution*, Bruce Franklin, ed. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1971).

59. *Rat* (New York), December 17, 1970.

60. On April 29, 1970, the U.S. government expanded its war in Vietnam through an invasion of Cambodia. This sparked the most massive wave of campus antiwar demonstrations in American history. On May 4, national guardsmen fired into a crowd of students at **Kent State University** in Kent, Ohio, killing four students. On May 14, two students were shot dead and fourteen wounded by police at **Jackson State College** in Jackson, Mississippi. By the end of the month, protests over the Kent and Jackson killings and the invasion of Cambodia had involved some 4 million students, with 350 colleges shut down by strikes, according to a report of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education released in 1971.

61. *Rat*, December 17, 1970.

62. This refers to the frame-up conspiracy trial of the "Panther Eleven." Nine of the eleven defendants supported the Cleaver faction in the Black Panther Party and were expelled by the Newton-Hilliard faction shortly before the split became public.

63. Quoted in *Good Times*, February 19, 1971.

64. In May 1968 a radical newspaper was founded in London called the *Black Dwarf*, with several Trotskyists on its editorial board. In March 1970 the editorial board split, and a second newspaper was established, the **Red Mole**, this one with a Trotskyist majority among its editors. At that time the British section of the Fourth International, the International Marxist Group (IMG), did not have its own newspaper, so it sought to use the *Red Mole* as its public organ while at the same time retaining the image of a broad "movement" newspaper by opening its pages to contributors whose views diverged considerably from the positions of the Fourth International. In August 1972 the masthead of the *Red Mole* was changed to add "Paper of the International Marxist Group." In May 1973 the *Red Mole* was discontinued and replaced by *Red Weekly*.

65. The tactic of "deep entry," or "entryism *sui generis*" (of a unique kind), by the Trotskyist forces of Europe into the mass Stalinist or Social Democratic parties was first adopted at the Tenth Plenum of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International in February 1952. The tactic was proposed by the secretary of the IS, Michel

Pablo. Previous experiences of the Trotskyist movement in working inside other larger parties, such as the British Labour Party or the French and American Socialist parties, had involved parties with a loose enough structure so that the Trotskyists were able to maintain their own press and function as a publicly identified caucus. Pablo explained that "deep entry" was *sui generis*, or unique, because it involved entering the highly bureaucratized Stalinist parties and remaining in them for some years, awaiting a radicalization in their ranks that had not yet begun. A second *sui generis* feature was that the only way to maintain a public Trotskyist press under such circumstances was to have a few members of the Trotskyist organization remain outside of the mass CP in order to publish a newspaper directed at the CP ranks. The tactic of "entryism *sui generis*" was abandoned by most of the European Trotskyist organizations by 1969.

66. **Harold Wilson** (1916-) was first elected to Parliament as a Labour member in 1945. He became the party's leader after the death of Hugh Gaitskell in 1963, and British prime minister following the Labour victory in the 1964 election. Labour was defeated in elections in June 1970. He was returned to office in February 1974, but resigned in March 1976, after the rejection of his austerity plan by the House of Commons.

67. **Pat Jordan** broke with the British Communist Party following the Hungarian revolution of 1956. He was briefly a member of the Revolutionary Socialist League, led by Ted Grant, which had been established in 1957 in support of the IS led by Pablo. He later split from Grant and established the Internationalist Group in Nottingham, also affiliated to the IS. His group participated in the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International in 1963, went through an unsuccessful fusion with the Grant group in 1964, and was renamed the International Group in 1965. In addition to the Nottingham nucleus, the International Group included some Trotskyists who supported the reunification of the International and had left Gerry Healy's Socialist Labour League when he refused to participate. The IG was renamed the **International Marxist Group** early in 1968. Jordan was elected national secretary of the IMG in March 1970.

68. *Internal Information Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), no. 6, October 1970.

69. **Connie Harris** joined the Revolutionary Socialist League, then the British section of the Fourth International, in 1942. She participated in the fusion between the RSL and the Workers International League in 1944 that produced the Revolutionary Communist Party. In 1949 the RCP dissolved so that its members could form a tendency in the Labour Party. Harris was a founding leader of the Socialist Labour League in 1959, which was the main Trotskyist organization in Britain in that period. She was expelled from the SLL shortly after by the Healy regime. She joined the Trotskyists that adhered to the Fourth International following the Reunification Congress and has been a leader of the IMG since its founding.

70. The **FLQ** (Front de Libération du Québec—Québec Liberation Front), an underground Québec separatist organization of about 100 members organized in loosely connected cells, had carried on a sporadic bombing campaign against the English Canadian authorities for a number of years in the late 1960s. On October 5, 1970, it kidnapped James Cross, British trade commissioner in Montréal, and on October 10 carried off a still more daring kidnapping, of Québec Labor Minister Pierre Laporte, a leader of the Liberal Party. The FLQ demanded the release of political prisoners, the payment of a large ransom, and an improvement in the terms for settling a strike of government workers. On October 16 Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau invoked the War Measures Act, placing the whole of Canada under virtual martial law and arresting hundreds of known radicals. The FLQ killed Laporte on October 17.

71. The **two arrested Trotskyists** were Art Young, chairman of the League for Socialist Action / Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière, who was also organizer of the Montréal branch of the LSO, and Penny Simpson, treasurer of the LSO's Montréal mayoralty election campaign committee. They were picked up on October 16 and released on October 22.

72. **Ross Dowson** (1917-) joined the Canadian Trotskyist movement at the end of World War II. He was a member of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International following reunification. He was the executive secretary and later the chairman of the LSA/LSO from its founding in 1961 to 1974, when he split from the Canadian Trotskyists and from the Fourth International after failing to win a majority to his position that Canadian nationalism is progressive in the struggle against American imperialism. Since 1974 he has led a small group in Toronto that publishes the newspaper *Forward*.

73. **Tariq Ali** (1943-) is a graduate of Government College, Lahore, Pakistan, and of Oxford University. He won fame as a leader of the British student antiwar movement in 1967-68. In April 1968 he joined the IMG, and was elected to the IEC of the Fourth International at the April 1969 world congress.

74. *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 72.

75. "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 95.

76. Joseph and Reba Hansen made a four-month tour in Latin America toward the end of 1961. One of the main purposes of the trip was to explore among Latin American Trotskyist organizations receptivity to proposals for the reunification of the Fourth International. Leaders of the International Secretariat faction of the Fourth International approved of the tour and provided helpful information for it. After the trip, Joseph Hansen made a public-speaking tour in the United States, reporting on his experiences in Latin America and the interest he found there in the Cuban revolution.

77. **Juan Posadas** (Homero Cristali) led a faction of Argentine Trotskyists whose delegates were recognized as a sympathizing organization by the Second Congress of the Fourth International in 1948. In

1951, the Third Congress recognized Posadas's Grupo Cuarta Internacional (GCI—Fourth International Group) as the official Argentine section. Shortly after the split in the International in 1953-54, Posadas became the head of a newly established **Buró Latinoamericano** (BLA), a formation whose member groups endorsed the positions of the International Secretariat faction of the Fourth International. Posadas split from the International in 1962. At that time he established paper committees that mimicked the names and structure of the leading bodies of the Fourth International, of which he claimed to be the continuity. This fact has been frequently seized on by Stalinist polemicists to present Posadas in their press as the principal representative of world Trotskyism. Since his break with the Fourth International Posadas has promulgated the theory that nuclear war would inevitably end in victory for world socialism, advocating that the Soviet Union launch such a war.

78. "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 86.

79. **Hugo González Moscoso** was general secretary of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR—Revolutionary Workers Party), the Bolivian section of the Fourth International. He was the party's presidential candidate in 1956. In that year the POR formally split, with the González faction supporting the International Secretariat. After Che's death in 1967 the POR formed an alliance with the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army) to relaunch guerrilla warfare in Bolivia. In January 1967 the POR was declared illegal, and González was arrested on April 13, 1967. After his release he functioned clandestinely and edited the POR newspaper *Combate* in the early 1970s. He is a long-time member of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International and was elected to the United Secretariat at the meeting of the IEC following the 1969 world congress.

80. The faction of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT) that published *El Combatiente* after the 1968 split was led by Mario Roberto Santucho Juárez; the PRT (*Verdad*) was led by Nahuel Moreno. The Santucho group supported the line of engaging in guerrilla warfare while Moreno opposed it.

81. Juan Domingo Perón (1895-1974) was the president of Argentina from 1946 to 1955 and from 1973 until his death. He offered concessions to the working class, seeking to win its support for his bourgeois government while he maneuvered for a better position for Argentine capital against the main contending imperialist forces in the area—Britain and the United States. His supporters captured the leadership of the main trade union movement, the Confederación General del Trabajo. Ousted by a military coup in 1955, Perón guided his movement from exile in Spain. The "revolutionary Peronist tendency" refers to a coalition called the "Opposition CGT" (also referred to as the "CGT of the Argentines" and the "Paseo Colón CGT"). It was led by Raimundo Ongaro, the former secretary-general of the Peronist printers' union.

82. **Camilo Torres Restrepo** (1929-1966) was a radical Catholic priest

in Colombia, who joined the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army) at the end of 1965. He had been the chaplain at the National University of Bogotá. He was killed in battle on February 17, 1966, becoming a martyr to the guerrilla movement throughout Latin America.

83. **Rouge** is a Trotskyist weekly newspaper published in France that reflects the views of the French section of the Fourth International, then called the *Ligue Communiste*.

84. On May 28, 1971, Livio Maitan issued a statement acknowledging that he was the author of the "**Domingo**" letter. The text of the November 24, 1970, letter, along with Maitan's statement, were published in English in the *International Information Bulletin*, no. 4, June 1971.

85. "The Crisis of the Trotskyist Movement in Argentina," letter to the Uruguayan Committee of the Fourth International by Domingo, November 24, 1970, *International Information Bulletin*, no. 4, June 1971, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 167.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

87. Nahuel Moreno, "The Chinese and Indochinese Revolutions," in *Fifty Years of World Revolution (1917-1967): An International Symposium*, Ernest Mandel, ed. (New York: Merit Publishers, 1968).

88. November 1970, in *International Information Bulletin*, no. 2, January 1971, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, pp. 97-108.

89. *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 106.

90. **Francisco Prada** was the political secretary and chief public spokesperson of the Venezuelan FLN/FALN (Frente de Liberación Nacional/Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional—National Liberation Front/Armed forces of National Liberation) led by Douglas Bravo. (See "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy," June 1970, note 23.) Prada was demonstratively elected a vice-president of the OLAS conference in July-August 1967, where he delivered a stinging denunciation of the Venezuelan CP for having abandoned the guerrilla struggle.

91. *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, p. 719, reprinted as Appendix I to this volume.

92. See "Letter from Hugo Blanco to Livio Maitan," October 17, 1970, *International Information Bulletin*, no. 2, January 1971, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, pp. 79-81.

93. "Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 106.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 195, emphasis in original.

95. *Ibid.*

96. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

97. "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 84.

98. "Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists," *Discussion on Latin America*, pp. 99-100, emphasis in original.

99. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

100. The **Haymarket martyrs** were members of the Chicago Social Revolutionary club and of the International Working People's Association (the "Black International"), an anarchist organization formed in Pittsburgh in 1883. On May 3, 1886, police fired on a mass meeting outside the McCormick reaper plant in Chicago in support of the eight-hour workday, killing at least one worker and wounding many others. The following night anarchist trade unionists called a peaceful protest meeting in Haymarket Square. As it adjourned the crowd was attacked by armed police. In the scuffle an unknown person threw a bomb at the police. The police opened fire on the crowd. Seven policemen and four workers were killed. Immediate arrests were ordered of known radicals and labor leaders. Of the eight Haymarket defendants who were convicted in October 1886, August Spies, Albert Parsons, Adolph Fischer, and George Engel were hanged on November 11, 1887. Louis Lingg committed suicide the day before his scheduled execution. Oscar Neebe, Samuel Fielden, and Michael Schwab were imprisoned until 1893, when they were pardoned by Illinois Governor John P. Altgeld.

101. **Albert R. Parsons** (1848-1887) was the best known of the anarchist leaders executed in the Haymarket case. He was born in Alabama and raised in Texas. He volunteered for the Confederate army in the Civil War, but supported the Radical Reconstruction and became a Republican when the war was over. He moved to Chicago in 1873 and became a typographical worker and union activist. In 1875 he joined the Social Democratic Party, and participated in the railway strike of 1877. He was a founder of the Socialist Labor Party the following year, and joined the anarchist International Working People's Association when it was founded in 1883. He was the editor of the Chicago anarchist newspaper *The Alarm* at the time of his arrest.

102. "Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 103, emphasis in original.

103. The **Popular Front** was the name given in 1935 to the coalition of the French Socialist and Communist parties with the procapitalist Radical Party. Support for such governmental coalitions with capitalist parties became a general strategy of the world Communist parties at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International that same year.

104. The theory of the "**Third Period**" comes from a resolution adopted by the Comintern in July 1929, which divided post-World War I history into three periods: (1) 1917-23, revolutionary upheaval; (2) 1924-28, capitalist stabilization; and (3) a period said to have begun in 1928 which would end with the final collapse of capitalism. On the basis of this schema the world Communist parties rejected united-front work with other working-class tendencies, formed their own "Red" trade unions, and, in Asia, initiated rural guerrilla warfare. This period came to an end following the rise of Hitler to power in Germany in 1933, after which Stalin proposed the Popular Front policy in search of allies among the governments of the bourgeois democracies.

105. "Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 97, emphasis in original.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

107. *Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

108. Indonesia had been under Japanese occupation during World War II. In August 1945, Sukarno of the National Party declared the country independent, both from Japan and from the previous Dutch colonial administration. In July 1947 the Dutch invaded, and the Nationalists, Communists, and Trotskyists joined forces in a military alliance against the Dutch. During a brief truce in the war in 1948 the Communist Party (PKI—Partai Komunis Indonesia), under the influence of Stalin's revival of ultraleftism in response to Washington's cold war, attempted an armed coup d'état at Madiun in September. The party was crushed. In the 1950s and 1960s it was rebuilt on a completely class-collaborationist line. It sided with Peking in the Sino-Soviet split after 1960. In September 1965 a group of left-wing officers attempted a military uprising to forestall an anticommunist crackdown they had learned was in preparation. The rising was only halfheartedly supported by the PKI. It was quickly defeated, leading to the massacre of the PKI.

109. D.N. Aidit (1924-1965) joined the PKI in 1943. He was elected to the Central Committee in 1947 and to the Politburo in 1948. After the Madiun putsch he went into exile in Vietnam and China, returning in 1950 and winning control of the party in 1951. Under his leadership the party grew to more than three million members, with twenty million more in trade unions and mass organizations under PKI leadership. He was executed without trial after his capture in a rural village at the end of November 1965.

110. Before World War II, Vietnam had been part of the French colony of Indochina. During the war the country was occupied by the Japanese, in collaboration with the profascist French authorities representing the puppet French government set up at Vichy by the Germans after 1940. On August 19, 1945, following the Japanese surrender at the end of the war, a spontaneous popular revolution swept Vietnam. It brought to power a coalition government dominated by the Vietnamese Communist Party and including various nationalist capitalist parties. This government proposed to welcome back to Vietnam the French, British, and American troops from the Allied side in World War II. The **Vietnamese Trotskyists**, who were strong in the Saigon area, opposed this decision. On September 14, 1945, the Stalinist-led government ordered the arrest of the Trotskyists, many of whom were then shot without trial. The Allied landing that was then welcomed by the CP led in 1946 to an eight-year war of conquest by the French government, which ended only with the massive French defeat at Dienbienphu in 1954.

111. **Ho Chi Minh** (1890-1969) was a founding member of the French Communist Party in 1920. He worked in China to carry out Stalin's policy in the Chinese revolution of 1925-27. He returned to Vietnam from exile in the USSR and China at the outbreak of World War II and helped to

organize the Viet Minh (League for the Independence of Vietnam). He headed the brief coalition government in 1945-46, and was president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam from 1954 to his death.

112. At the **Geneva conference** in May 1954 the Viet Minh, which following Dienbienphu controlled the whole of the territory of Vietnam, agreed to withdraw its forces to the seventeenth parallel and permit the reestablishment of a French puppet government in the South. This concession was made under heavy pressure from Chou En-lai and Molotov, the representatives of Peking and Moscow, who were seeking a "peaceful coexistence" agreement with Paris and Washington.

113. *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 68, and in this volume.

114. Leon Trotsky, *Military Writings* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971), p. 24.

115. "Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists," *Discussion on Latin America*, pp. 98-99.

116. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

117. *Ibid.*

118. *Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

119. *Ibid.*

120. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

121. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

122. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

123. *Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

124. *Intercontinental Press*, April 20, 1970, p. 359.

125. **Quatrième Internationale** (Fourth International) was a French-language theoretical magazine that presented the views of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. It ceased publication in 1975.

126. "Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 105.

127. *Ibid.*, p. 101ff.

128. In **Russia** at the time of the October 1917 Bolshevik revolution the tsarist army had virtually disintegrated. The Bolshevik Party, at the head of the mass soviets, faced no serious military opposition until the White Guard forces were organized in the spring and summer of 1918. In **Germany** at the end of World War I the regular army proved to be unable by itself to stand against the revolutionary upheaval. On November 3, 1918, a mutiny in the German fleet at Kiel broke out and spread to the workers and *Landwehr* troops behind the lines. The revolt toppled the monarchy and brought the reformist Social Democratic Party (SPD) to power. The Social Democrats refused to challenge capitalist property, and in January 1919 a second revolution occurred, led by the Spartakus League, the forerunner of the German Communist Party. The rebellion was crushed by the Social Democratic government. In **Spain** in July 1936 the civil war began with a fascist military revolt against the Popular Front government, in this case pitting the full strength of the bourgeois army against the revolutionary workers and their liberal leaders. In **Vietnam** also, while the local French and Japanese forces had collapsed

when the Viet Minh set up its coalition government in 1945, the Viet Minh soon had to face the highly trained and disciplined forces of the British and French expeditionary corps.

129. The Chinese revolution of 1925-27 was already in deep decline after anticommunist coups in Shanghai in April 1927 and in Wuhan in July, when Stalin ordered an **insurrection in Canton** to coincide with the Fifteenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party in December. The insurrection began on December 11, 1927. The Chinese Communist Party held the city for three days, declaring a "Soviet government." The Kuomintang army crushed the uprising, killing more than 5,000 of the insurgents. In **Germany in March 1921** the Communist Party led an abortive insurrection, planned by the Hungarian revolutionist Bela Kun and supported by Comintern Chairman Gregory Zinoviev. The rising was motivated by the "theory of the offensive," which postulated that military action by the party could "electrify" the masses without regard to whether the masses were actually involved. The "March Action" was repudiated by the Third Congress of the Comintern held in July 1921, where Lenin and Trotsky demonstratively labeled themselves the "right wing" and led a fight for the adoption of the tactic of working-class united front and rejection of the "theory of the offensive."

130. The **Paris Commune**, the first workers' government in world history, was proclaimed on March 28, 1871, in the aftermath of the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. The Commune lasted for seventy-two days, but failed to extend its influence to the rest of the country. It was finally crushed by the bourgeois government, which had set up its capital at Versailles. After the military defeat of the Paris workers, some 30,000 Communards were executed by the Versaillaise in reprisal for the rebellion.

131. "Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 101.

132. *Ibid.*

133. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

134. *Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

135. Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution* (London: Sphere Books Ltd., 1967), vol. 2, p. 23. The **Vyborg district** is an industrial suburb of Leningrad (Petrograd in 1917) where the workers were heavily pro-Bolshevik.

136. The "**July Days**" in Russia in 1917 were marked by an eruption of spontaneous workers' demonstrations in Petrograd against the capitalist Provisional Government, which had come to power earlier that year in the February revolution. The movement began to head toward an unprepared popular insurrection, with sharp clashes with the government's troops and police. The Bolsheviks opposed an insurrection at that time as premature, but decided to participate in the movement so as not to be cut off from the working class. They acted to try to stop the demonstrations short of a head-on confrontation with the regime, but were accused of fomenting the unrest. The Bolshevik newspapers were

then closed down and many of their leaders, including Trotsky, were arrested.

137. "Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 103, emphasis in original.

138. Víctor Paz Estenssoro, the head of the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR—Revolutionary Nationalist Movement), a liberal capitalist party, won the 1951 Bolivian elections. After the vote, however, President Mamerto Urriolagoita turned power over to a military junta pledged to keep the MNR out of office. On April 9, 1952, the MNR and the workers' organizations, including the Bolivian Trotskyists of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR—Revolutionary Workers Party), led a revolution that defeated the junta and placed Paz Estenssoro in power. Under pressure of a mass workers' mobilization, particularly of the tin miners, the government carried out a number of sweeping reforms. It gave the Bolivian Indians the right to vote for the first time, instituted a redistribution of the land, and expropriated the tin mines. The revolution waned in the mid-1950s, the MNR lost its mass support, and a military coup reimposed army rule in 1964 under General René Barrientos Ortuño.

139. "Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 107.

140. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-2.

141. *Ibid.*, p. 102. Between the beginning of the February 1917 Russian revolution and Lenin's return from exile in April, the Bolshevik Party followed a weak and vacillating course, in effect endorsing the capitalist Provisional Government and acting as a loyal opposition. The party leadership in Russia at that time was represented by **Vyacheslav Molotov** (1890-), and, after March 15, by **Joseph Stalin** (1879-1953) and **Lev Kamenev** (1883-1936). The **Independent Socialist Party of Germany** (USPD—Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands) was formed in 1916 in a split to the left from the official Social Democratic Party of Germany. The official leader of the USPD was **Hugo Haase** (1863-1919) and it included revolutionists such as **Rosa Luxemburg** (1870-1919) and **Karl Liebknecht** (1871-1919) as well as centrists such as **Karl Kautsky** and the revisionist and reformist **Eduard Bernstein** (1850-1932). The Spartakus League split from the USPD in December 1918, becoming the German Communist Party. The USPD participated with the Spartakus League in a Revolutionary Committee that led the German revolution of November 1918–January 1919, but it failed to carry out in action the decision of this body on January 6 to launch an insurrection in Berlin. The revolution was crushed on January 10 by troops of the Social Democratic government. In 1922 the USPD reunited with the SPD.

142. In the period of the 1905 revolution in Russia Lenin had raised the slogan of a "**democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry**," by which he envisaged a revolutionary governmental alliance between the workers' parties and a mass peasant party. He distinguished such a regime from a socialist government by assuming that the peasant representatives would not approve of the expropriation

of capitalist property and that such measures might be delayed for a long period of time after a workers' and peasants' government was established. Trotsky considered Lenin's theory to be wrong on two counts: (1) that it overestimated the ability of the peasants to create a mass party. Trotsky held instead that the peasants would be led either by the workers' parties or by the capitalist parties. (2) The capitalist class would never tolerate the rule of the workers' and peasants' government and their resistance would be of so fierce a character as to force the revolutionary regime to move early to the expropriation of capitalist property. It was this concept of the democratic revolution against tsarism, being fused with the socialist revolution against capitalism that Trotsky called **permanent revolution**. The greatest problem with Lenin's theory of the "democratic dictatorship" was that it could be interpreted to justify support to a liberal capitalist government as a necessary first stage of a revolution. After the February revolution in Russia in 1917 and before Lenin's return from exile on April 3, the Bolshevik Party leadership in Russia appealed to the concept of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" as grounds for giving critical support to the capitalist Provisional Government. Lenin immediately after his return drafted "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution," known as the **April Theses**, which abandoned the slogan of "democratic dictatorship" and adopted Trotsky's basic conclusion that the Russian revolution must lead to a workers' government committed to socialism. This was concretized in the slogan "All power to the Soviets." The day after the Bolshevik *Pravda* (Truth) published Lenin's theses calling for the overthrow of the Provisional Government, the Petrograd Committee of the Bolsheviks voted thirteen to two against them.

143. "Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 107.

144. Leon Trotsky, *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, 3rd ed., p. 124.

145. *Ibid.*, pp. 113-14, emphasis in original.

146. "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 86.

147. **James Patrick Cannon** (1890-1974) was a founding leader of the American Trotskyist movement in 1928. He had been a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party since 1920 and had served on the Presidium of the Communist International in Moscow in 1922-23. He was national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party from its founding in 1938 until 1953. Thereafter he became the party's national chairman and national chairman emeritus.

148. "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 91.

149. *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 27.

150. See "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 92.

151. "Resolution on New Rise of the World Revolution,"

Intercontinental Press, July 14, 1969, p. 669.

152. "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 92.

Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet

1. *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, p. 720.

2. "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America," *Intercontinental Press*, April 20, 1970, p. 360.

3. *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, p. 720.

4. Joseph Hansen, "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America," *Discussion on Latin America (1968-1972)* (New York: Socialist Workers Party, January 1973), p. 23, and in this volume.

5. *Ibid.*, *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 25.

6. "Resolution on Latin America," *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, p. 718.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*, p. 719.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 720.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 718.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Hansen, "Assessment of the Draft Resolution," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 24.

13. *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, p. 720.

14. In mid-February 1971, under mass pressure, leaders of the COB (Central Obrera Boliviana—Bolivian Workers Federation) and various radical parties formed the **Popular Assembly** with the aim of proposing laws to deepen the anti-imperialist measures of the Torres government and prevent any concessions to the right. On May Day the assembly's 220 delegates, 60 percent representing unions, set up operations in the building previously used by the Bolivian congress. They passed resolutions for the expulsion of the U.S. military and intelligence forces and for workers' management of the state-owned tin mines. Despite rumors and open plotting by rightist military officers, the reformist leaders of the assembly adjourned it for two months in July. In August the army overthrew the Torres government.

15. Hansen, "Report on the 1969 World Congress of the Fourth International," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 54, and in this volume.

16. "Resolution on Latin America," *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, p. 719.

17. Hansen, "Report on the 1969 World Congress," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 58.

18. Hansen, "Assessment of the Draft Resolution," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 21, and in this volume.

19. "The Cuban Revolution and Its Lessons," *Fifty Years of World Revolution* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1968), p. 193.

20. "Return to the Road of Trotskyism," *International Information Bulletin*, no. 5, March 1969, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 29.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

22. The 1968 document appeared in English as "The Only Road to Workers' Power and Socialism," *International Information Bulletin*, no. 4, October 1972, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 233.

23. "Return to the Road of Trotskyism," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 32.

24. "Major Problems of the Latin American Revolution—a Reply to Régis Debray," *International Socialist Review*, vol. 28, no. 5, September-October 1967, p. 7.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8. Rather than try Blanco in Cuzco, where a general strike demanding his release had erupted soon after his capture in May 1963, the government waited almost four years and tried him and twenty-eight other peasant leaders before a military court in Tacna, a remote town on the border between Peru and Chile, where they hoped Blanco had less support. But the people of Tacna soon learned who the defendants were and began bringing them gifts of food. An international defense campaign was organized by the Fourth International, enlisting the support of unions, intellectuals, and masses of people. There were demonstrations of tens of thousands in Peru itself. The military sentenced Blanco to a twenty-five-year sentence instead of death, and he was amnestied in 1970, thanks to the continuing defense effort.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

27. Manco II was Manco Inca Yupanqui (d. 1544). He led the siege against Pizarro's *conquistadores* at Cuzco for ten months in 1536, was finally defeated by superior weapons and a food shortage at harvest time, and retreated to the Andes where he set up the last Inca government, which survived until the defeat of Tupac Amaru.

28. "Major Problems of the Latin American Revolution," *International Socialist Review*, vol. 28, no. 5, September-October 1967, pp. 9-10, Blanco's emphasis.

29. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972.

30. "Letter from Hugo Blanco to Joseph Hansen—January 1970," *International Information Bulletin*, no. 2, April 1970, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 64, emphasis in original.

31. "Resolution on Latin America," *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, p. 719.

32. "The Position of the Mexican Delegation to the Ninth Congress of the Fourth International on the United Secretariat Resolution on Latin America," *International Information Bulletin*, no. 6, April 1969, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 35.

33. The **Unidad Popular** (Popular Unity) was an electoral coalition including Salvador Allende's Socialist Party, the Communist Party, some smaller leftist parties, and the bourgeois Radical Party. Allende won the presidential election of September 1970. The Popular Front government

was overthrown by the military coup of September 11, 1973.

34. Hansen, "Assessment of the Draft Resolution," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 22.

35. "Resolution on Latin America," *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, p. 719.

36. Hansen, "Assessment of the Draft Resolution," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 19.

37. "Return to the Road of Trotskyism," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 34.

38. "Resolution on Latin America," *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, p. 716.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 718.

40. Hansen, "Assessment of the Draft Resolution," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 26.

41. Ernest Germain and Martine Knoeller, "The Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists in Latin America," *International Information Bulletin*, no. 2, January 1971, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 103, emphasis in original.

42. Hansen, "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America," *International Information Bulletin*, no. 6, July 1970, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 74.

43. Hugo González Moscoso, "The Cuban Revolution and Its Lessons," *Fifty Years of World Revolution* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1968).

44. "New Revolutionary Ferment in Bolivia," *Intercontinental Press*, June 10, 1968, p. 546.

45. **René Barrientos Ortuño** (1919-1969) was commander of the Bolivian air force before being elected vice-president on the MNR (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario—Revolutionary Nationalist Movement) ticket in 1964. He broke with President Paz and joined the November 1964 army coup, becoming head of the junta. Elected president in July 1966, he died in a helicopter crash and was succeeded by Vice-President Adolfo Siles Salinas.

46. "Experiences and Perspectives of the Armed Struggle in Bolivia," *Intercontinental Press*, September 2, 1968, pp. 706-7.

47. "An Insufficient Document," *International Information Bulletin*, no. 2, January 1969, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 16.

48. **Víctor Paz Estenssoro** (1907-) was the founder of the MNR and president of the country twice—1952-56 and 1960-64. During his first presidency he nationalized the big tin mines. In the 1960s he presided over a deteriorating economy. The **Partido Obrero Revolucionario** (POR—Revolutionary Workers Party) of Bolivia was founded in exile in Argentina in 1934. Its program historically emphasized the role of the urban proletariat in the struggle against imperialism. It participated in the revolution of 1952, playing a big role in the COB. A faction fight in the POR began in 1953 with the González faction later becoming the Bolivian section of the International Secretariat, and the Lora faction later allying itself with the International Committee. The formal split

occurred in 1956, both groups using the name POR. In the reunification period, the POR (González) split; one group supported Posadas; González led another group which supported the reunification. The Lora group supported Healy and remained outside the Fourth International. The POR (González) was outlawed in 1967.

49. **General Reque Terán** commanded the Fourth Division of Camiri against Che's ELN guerrillas. He became chief of staff of the armed forces during the Torres government.

50. "New Revolutionary Ferment in Bolivia," *Intercontinental Press*, June 10, 1968, pp. 544-45.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 545.

52. **General Rogelio Miranda** succeeded Ovando as commander in chief of the Bolivian armed forces in September 1969. He organized a right-wing coup in October 1970, forcing Ovando's resignation. **General Juan José Torres** (1921-), who had been ousted from Ovando's cabinet in July, opposed the coup; massive mobilizations of the workers and students enabled Torres and other liberal officers to defeat Miranda's forces. The Torres regime which then came to power expropriated U.S. companies, expelled the Peace Corps, outlawed political parties, and strengthened ties with the Soviet bloc. Torres was deposed in the August 1971 right-wing coup that installed Colonel Hugo Banzer Suárez.

53. **Jenny Koeller**, a militant student leader, was pregnant when she was killed. **Elmo Catalán Avilés** was said to be a leader in the ELN. General Ovando denied that the ruling junta was responsible, blaming either a rival faction of the ELN or an "unknown right-wing group."

54. **Osvaldo "Chato" Peredo** succeeded his older brother "Inti" as commander of the ELN after Inti's death in a police raid in La Paz in 1969. (Chato's other older brother, "Coco," had died with Che in 1967.) The **Teoponte guerrillas** included Chileans and Peruvians as well as Bolivians. Many were university students from La Paz. In four months they were unable to recruit any peasants. They took two hostages and traded them to the government in exchange for the freeing of ten political prisoners. Peredo was captured in the last days of the Ovando regime and deported to Chile. The Torres government listed fifty-five guerrillas and five soldiers killed in the fighting in Teoponte.

55. The **MNR** is the largest political party in Bolivia. It was founded in the early 1940s by young veterans of the 1932-35 Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay as a nationalist party opposed to the influence of the big mining companies in national affairs (the major tin mines' shareholders included British and U.S. capitalists). It won the support of the tin miners when it sided with them after the army massacred miners in 1942 at the Siglo Veinte-Catavi mine. The Tin Miners Federation chose MNR members as its central leadership. The MNR led the revolution of 1952, governing the country for twelve years afterward. The party split in 1960 and 1964, suffered repression under Barrientos, led the Popular Assembly under Torres, and participated in the Banzer government until 1973. **Juan Lechín** first gained fame as a soccer star on a tin-mining

company's team. Leader of the miners and the left wing of the MNR, he broke with the MNR in 1963 to found the PRIN (Partido Revolucionario de Izquierda Nacionalista—Revolutionary Party of the Nationalist Left). **Hernán Siles Suazo** (1914-) was vice-president in 1952-56 and president, 1956-60. He continued the policies of Paz Estenssoro and was succeeded by him.

56. **Colonel Hugo Banzer Suárez**, a prosperous rancher, was appointed head of the national military academy in 1969 under Ovando. He was exiled after the failure of the January 10, 1971, coup but returned secretly, took power in August 1971, and ruled until he was overthrown in July 1978.

57. The **Falange Socialista Boliviana** (Bolivian Socialist Falange) was established by Bolivian exiles in Chile in 1935, modeled on the fascist party in Spain. It became a rallying point for right-wing opponents of the MNR government in the 1950s. It participated with the right wing of the army in the conspiracy to overthrow Torres.

58. "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America—Defense of an Orientation and a Method," *International Information Bulletin*, no. 2, January 1971, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 83.

59. "Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 98.

60. "Letter from Hugo Blanco to Livio Maitan—October 17, 1970," *International Information Bulletin*, no. 2, January 1971, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 80.

61. "Resolution on Latin America," *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, p. 720.

62. "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America," *Intercontinental Press*, April 20, 1970, p. 359.

63. "La Universidad y el Comando Político de la C.O.B.," *Revista de Orientación Teórico-Doctrinal*, 3a Epoca. Republished in *Revista de América*, July-October 1971, p. 50.

64. Ibid.

65. **Guillermo Lora** became a Trotskyist as a university student, joined the POR, and was a leader of its work among the tin miners in the 1940s; he was arrested and exiled several times for this work, became a well-known agitator, and was one of three POR candidates elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1947. His group, the **POR (Lora)**, originated in a split of the POR in the 1950s (see note 48, p. 567). It opposed guerrilla warfare in Bolivia, but adapted to reformist tendencies; with other forces in the Popular Assembly, it expressed critical support for the Torres regime. Lora expected Torres to arm the masses to prevent the right-wing coup.

66. "The Current Situation in Bolivia," *Intercontinental Press*, June 14, 1971, p. 545.

67. "The Bolivian Political Crisis and Torres' Regime," *Intercontinental Press*, November 23, 1970, p. 1024, emphasis in original.

68. "La Universidad y el Comando Político de la C.O.B.," *Revista de América*, July-October 1971, p. 50.

69. "The Meeting of the Popular Assembly," *International* (London), September-October 1971, p. 59.

70. "The Current Situation in Bolivia," *Intercontinental Press*, June 14, 1971, p. 545.

71. Published in English under the title, "Put the People's Assembly on the Road to Socialism!" *Intercontinental Press*, June 21, 1971, p. 575.

72. 1905 (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), pp. 268-69.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 269.

74. "The Bolivian Crisis and Torres' Regime," *Intercontinental Press*, November 23, 1970, p. 1024.

75. The Bolivian **Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionario** (MIR—Movement of the Revolutionary Left), a Social Democratic group, had one seat in the Popular Assembly.

76. "The Current Situation in Bolivia," *Intercontinental Press*, June 14, 1971, p. 545.

77. "Interview with Hugo González Moscoso," *International*, September-October 1971, p. 64.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

79. **Lavr G. Kornilov** (1870-1918) was a Siberian cossack who became Kerensky's commander in chief in July 1917 and led a counterrevolutionary putsch against Kerensky in September 1917. Arrested, he escaped to lead the counterrevolution until April 1918, when he was killed.

80. The **Frente Revolucionario Antiimperialista** (FRA—Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Front) was formed in November 1971. The signers of its manifesto included both the pro-Moscow and the pro-Peking CPs, both PORs, the MIR, the Socialist Party, the ELN, and Torres. Its manifesto stated that "the need is undeniable to build a fighting unity of all the revolutionary, democratic, and progressive forces so that the great battle can be begun in conditions offering a real perspective for a popular and national government." ("Manifesto of Bolivian Front Against the Dictatorship," *Intercontinental Press*, December 6, 1971, p. 1078).

81. Translated from "Sobre el Frente Revolucionario Antiimperialista," an unpublished resolution by the POR (*Combate*), signed with the denotation, "collective leadership."

82. *Ibid.*

83. *Ibid.*

84. *Revista de América*, no. 8-9, May-August 1972, p. 21.

85. **General Juan Carlos Onganía** (1914-), commander in chief of the Argentine army, 1963-65, seized power from President Arturo Illia in a right-wing military coup in 1966, supported by businessmen who aimed to head off a resurgence of Peronism. Onganía dissolved the legislature, banned political parties, censored the press, and put the national universities under government control. When opposition to his policies grew, the military junta replaced him with General Roberto Marcelo Levingston in June 1970.

86. **Lt. General Alejandro A. Lanusse** (1918-) was the central leader of the Argentine officer corps in the early 1970s. He had been interned for five years under the Perón government before its overthrow in 1955. Lanusse masterminded the military coup to overthrow General Onganía and placed General Roberto Marcelo Levingston in power in June 1970. In March 1971 he took over the government himself at the head of a three-man junta. He legalized political parties and organized the elections that led to the inauguration of Héctor José Cámpora in May 1973. At that time Lanusse retired from active service. Lanusse was jailed briefly several times after the March 1976 military coup that overthrew Isabel Martínez de Péron and installed the government of General Jorge Rafael Videla.

87. Lanusse announced the GAN (Great National Plan) when he took power. He called for elections in March 1973 and invited the traditional bourgeois parties to join with the military government to save the country from anarchy. The capitalists aimed to divert the social struggle into electoral channels with the collaboration of the Peronist union leaders; in return, the Peronists would be legalized and be able to participate in the election. Perón himself might be allowed to return.

88. The CGT (General Confederation of Labor) was formed in 1930 under syndicalist and Socialist Party leadership. It split in 1943 before the June 4 military coup. Under the new secretariat of labor and social welfare, headed by Perón, it was reunited and grew by nearly two million members in two years. Perón supported organizing efforts, pressured employers to make concessions, and decreed many labor and social security laws. From then on, the CGT and most of its constituent unions were Peronist.

89. The **Radical Party** (Unión Cívica Radical) has been one of the main bourgeois parties in Argentina since 1912.

90. **Augusto Vandor** was a Peronist, leader of the metalworkers' union and of the larger wing of the CGT after the split. He was assassinated July 1, 1969. **Raimundo Ongaro** was a left Peronist Catholic militant, leader of the printers' union, who also worked with the CP. He was arrested and imprisoned for several years after the murder of Vandor.

91. The **Partido Comunista Revolucionario** (PCR—Revolutionary Communist Party) was formed by dissident CP youth in 1968. It advocated urban armed struggle under the leadership of the party. The **Communist Vanguard** (VC—Vanguardia Comunista) was founded about 1964 by Elías Seman.

92. The **Montoneros** were one of the main left-wing Peronist guerrilla groups. **Pedro Eugenio Aramburu** (1903-1970) became president on the overthrow of Perón in 1955 and held office until 1958. He was involved in plots against the Onganía government, and Onganía was thought to be involved in his murder. His assassination signaled the coup that deposed Onganía and installed Levingston in June 1970.

93. **Política Obrera** (Workers Politics) was the Argentine grouping

affiliated to the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI). The OCRFI was created after a 1971 split among the Trotskyist groups that had refused to participate in the 1963 reunification of the Fourth International and which had continued to use the name International Committee. Pierre Lambert has been the principal leader of the OCRFI since its formation. Política Obrera was expelled from the OCRFI in January 1979.

94. When the CGT split, the government granted the larger group, led by Vandor, the use of the CGT headquarters on **Calle Azopardo**; the rival headquarters was on Paseo Colón. The groups were often identified by their addresses. José Rucci, a moderate Peronist, was CGT general secretary. He was assassinated on September 25, 1973.

95. The PRT (*La Verdad*) merged with the **Partido Socialista Argentino** (PSA—Argentine Socialist Party) in late 1971. The PSA, led by Juan Carlos Coral, was a splinter of the old SP of Argentina; the SP, in decline after the rise of Peronism, had split in the early 1960s under the impact of the Cuban revolution. The PSA moved to the left as the social crisis deepened. After the fusion with the PRT (*La Verdad*) the new party retained the name PSA. Its name was changed in December 1972 to Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers Party).

96. The **assassinations** were in March–April 1972. They included Roberto Mario Uzal, a conservative political figure mortally wounded on March 18 in an unsuccessful kidnap attempt by the Montoneros; Oberdan Sallustro of Fiat, kidnapped March 31 by the ERP (Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo—Revolutionary Army of the People) and executed April 10 after the government refused to ransom him; and General Juan Carlos Sánchez, commander of the Second Army Corps, assassinated April 10 by the ERP and the FAR (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias—Revolutionary Armed Forces).

97. *Resoluciones del V Congreso y de los Comité Central y Comité Ejecutivo Posteriores* (Resolutions of the Fifth Congress and of subsequent meetings of the Central and Executive committees), p. 42. A slightly different translation appears in "Resolutions of the Fifth Congress of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores," *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 5, April 1973, p. 25.

98. *Ibid.*

99. *El Unico Camino Hasta el Poder Obrero y el Socialismo*, translated in *International Information Bulletin*, no. 4, October 1972, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 233.

100. *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 223.

101. **Mario Roberto Santucho Juárez** (1936–1976) was the central leader of the PRT (*Combatiente*) and of the ERP. He was a leader of the populist Frente Revolucionario Indoamericanista Popular prior to its fusion with the Trotskyist *Palabra Obrera* in 1965 to form the PRT. Arrested in August 1971, Santucho was imprisoned in Rawson, Patagonia. Together with five other prisoners, Santucho escaped on August 15, 1972, hijacking a plane to Chile. He then went to Cuba. In 1973 he led the

ERP in a split from the Fourth International. That same year he helped found the Coordinating Revolutionary Junta, which included the ERP, the Chilean MIR, the Bolivian ELN, and the Uruguayan MLN (Tupamaros). Santucho later returned to Argentina, where both he and **Enrique Haroldo Gorriarán Merlo** (1942-1976), another ERP leader, were killed during a raid by security forces in a Buenos Aires suburb on July 19, 1976.

102. *Intercontinental Press*, November 27, 1972, p. 1317.

103. See "Una Victoria Revolucionaria" in *El Combatiente*, August 9, 1971.

104. The Chilean **Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria** (MIR—Movement of the Revolutionary Left) was founded in 1965. Its principal leader was Miguel Enríquez, who became its secretary-general in 1967. The MIR supported the OLAS conference in Havana that year and emerged as the main Castroist organization in Chile. It carried on peasant organization and land seizures and had a perspective of urban guerrilla warfare. Driven underground in 1969, it returned to public activity and underwent a considerable growth under the Allende government (November 1970 to September 1973). The MIR refused to join the Unidad Popular and was sharply critical of the UP's most reformist components, particularly the Communist Party. But its stand in practice was to give critical support to Allende. After the September 1973 military coup the MIR carried out armed terrorist actions against the Pinochet junta. Miguel Enríquez was killed in a gun battle in October 1974.

105. The Fourth International's analysis is that while the Cuban workers' state lacks forms of workers' democracy, it does not have a hardened bureaucratic caste in power; the task of instituting workers' democracy therefore does not require a political revolution.

106. "Resoluciones sobre dinámica y relaciones de nuestra guerra revolucionaria," p. 27, translated in *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 5, April 1973, p. 16.

107. Declaration published in *La Verdad*, November 10, 1970.

108. *La Verdad*, March 9, 1971.

109. *Intercontinental Press*, June 28, 1971, p. 615, emphasis in original.

110. *Ibid.*

111. The **Workers' and Socialist Pole** was a slate of over 2,200 candidates, including many union militants who were not members of the PSA, in the general elections held on March 11, 1973. In late 1972, after the PRT (*La Verdad*) merged with the PSA to form the new PSA, they placed 75 percent of their slots on the ballot at the disposal of candidates of the Frente Obrero (Workers Front) at its national meeting of over one thousand on December 16. The Frente Obrero candidates included SITRAC-SITRAM leaders such as José Francisco Páez. The PST also formed a Socialist Front with the Partido Socialista Popular (PSP—Popular Socialist Party); the front was open to all who agreed on a class-struggle program for socialism. The PST presidential candidate, Juan Carlos Coral, received about 100,000 votes.

112. *Intercontinental Press*, April 26, 1971, p. 388.

113. *Ibid.*

114. *Ibid.*

115. *Ibid.*

116. *La Verdad*, November 1, 1971.

117. **Arturo Frondizi** (1908-) was the leader of the Intransigent wing of the Radical Party, the Unión Cívica Radical-Intransigente. The Radical Party (UCR) had split in the 1950s into the Intransigents and the **UCR del Pueblo**. Frondizi was president of Argentina from 1958 to 1962, when he was overthrown by the military.

118. "Declaration of the PRT on the Thirty-six-Hour Strike," *La Verdad*, November 10, 1970, emphasis added.

119. *Avanzada Socialista*, August 16, 1972.

120. The Frente Amplio (**Broad Front**) in Uruguay was formed February 5, 1971, by liberals, leftists, and some union leaders. This "anti-imperialist, nationalist, and antioligarchical coalition" included the CP, the SP, the Posadista POR (Trotskyist), the PRT (Uruguay), and splinter bourgeois parties. The left-bourgeois elements and the CP were the decisive forces in it.

121. *Intercontinental Press*, November 27, 1972, p. 1319.

122. In 1971 the **PRT (Uruguay)** had only recently been formed and was not officially affiliated to the Fourth International. Its decision to remain inside the Frente Amplio after it became clear that the bloc could not be won to a Trotskyist program was made on the grounds that under Uruguayan electoral law the PRT (U) could not get a ballot place for its own candidates except as a sublist of the Frente Amplio. It participated in the November 1971 elections with a slate of its own candidates running on their own program, but agreed to head its slate with the names of the bourgeois candidates of the Frente Amplio for president, vice-president, and mayor of Montevideo. Hansen's article, "The 'Broad Front' Suffers Defeat," criticized this decision as a serious mistake by the PRT (U).

123. "Report on Negotiations with the Armed Forces," *Correo Tupamaros*, July 5, 1972.

124. "PRT's Position on 'Democratization' in Argentina," *Intercontinental Press*, July 31, 1972, p. 903. The **Christians** were the Christian Democratic Party, a minor anti-Peronist liberal party established by a group of lay Catholics in the early 1950s. The **Radical Left** refers to the Frondizi wing of the UCR.

125. The Lanusse government feared that **Perón's return** might touch off mass demonstrations against the dictatorship. On November 17, 1972, the day Perón arrived, the government mobilized over 30,000 soldiers in Buenos Aires and allowed only 300 supporters to meet him at the airport. Perón's intentions were clear: before ending his exile in Spain, he said his mission was "one of peace, not war," and referred to himself as "a vegetarian lion."

126. **Juan Carlos Coral** was a nationally prominent socialist figure, a member of parliament before it was shut down by the junta in 1966. He

had a long record of fighting against the dictatorship and of leadership in the movement to defend the Cuban revolution. He was a delegate to the OLAS conference in 1967 and was the PST presidential candidate in 1973.

127. An English translation of the text appeared in *Intercontinental Press*, November 13, 1972.

128. "Political Crisis and Revolutionary Struggle in Argentina," *Intercontinental Press*, April 26, 1971, pp. 388-89.

129. "PRT's Position on 'Democratization' in Argentina," *Intercontinental Press*, July 31, 1972, pp. 903-4.

130. "The Only Road to Workers' Power and Socialism," *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 229.

131. *Estrella Roja*, no. 11, March 1972.

132. "On the Armed Forces," *Estrella Roja*, no. 7, October 1971.

133. See note 96 above.

134. The kidnapping of **Robert Nogrette** on March 8, 1972, came four days after the funeral of Pierre Overney, a worker murdered at a rally outside the Renault plant in the Paris suburb of Boulogne-Billancourt on February 25. The kidnappers were members of the New Popular Resistance (Nouvelle Résistance Populaire), which described itself as a "clandestine organization for the self-defense of the masses." They demanded the release of several Maoists arrested in connection with the rally at which Overney was murdered, and the rehiring of workers who had subsequently been fired. They released Nogrette two days later, concluding they had made a blunder.

135. *Rood*, March 30, 1972.

136. *Ibid*.

137. *El Combatiente*, April 8, 1972.

138. **Dr. Julio Iribarren Borges** (1911-1967) had been head of the Venezuelan government's Social Security Institute until a few days before he was kidnapped on March 1. In January he had issued orders for a sharp increase in social security taxes that had been very unpopular. His family had long been prominent in Venezuelan politics—his brother, **Ignacio Iribarren Borges**, was foreign minister. The **Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN—Armed Forces of National Liberation)**, in its March 4, 1967, statement claiming responsibility for the killing, also accused **Julio Iribarren Borges** of doing work for the government's secret police, the **DIGEPOL**, in particular, of reporting to the **DIGEPOL** radical activities by employees of the Social Security Institute.

139. **Elías Manuít Camero** was president of the **Frente de Liberación Nacional/Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FLN/FALN)** headed by **Douglas Bravo**. Manuít was part of the **FLN/FALN's** permanent mission in Havana. Castro's March 13, 1967, speech marked the beginning of his campaign against the Venezuelan CP.

140. President **Raúl Leoni** (1905-) continued Betancourt's reform policies as well as an antiguerrilla campaign that suppressed left-wing opponents of the government. During his administration (1964-69) he eliminated university autonomy, making it difficult for the youth groups

of the MIR and the CP to function; he also suspended the legality of the CP and forced its leaders into exile.

141. Quoted in Castro's "Those Who Are Not Revolutionary Fighters Cannot Be Called Communists," translated in *Intercontinental Press*, March 31, 1967, p. 332.

142. *Ibid.*, pp. 346-47.

143. "Resolution on Latin America," *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, p. 720.

144. "Let's Keep to the Issues, Let's Avoid Diversions!" *International Information Bulletin*, no. 6, November 1971, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 183.

145. *Collected Works*, vol. 6, p. 260, emphasis in original.

146. A series of splits in the PRT (*Combatiente*) grew out of disagreements that surfaced around the Fifth Congress of the PRT in July 1970. (See "Resolutions of the Fifth Congress of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores," *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 5, April 1973, especially the section "The Class Struggle Inside the Party.") Within a year of the congress, the party lost 15 percent of its membership. Some of the splits were the Tendencia Obrera, spring 1970; the Grupo Obrero Revolucionario, in 1971; and the Leninist Tendency, summer 1972. In spring 1973 there was a further split, producing two new groups; the ERP-22 de Agosto (August 22 ERP), which had a pro-Peronist policy in the election, and the Fracción Roja (Red Faction), which called for building a Leninist party and remaining within the Fourth International.

147. At **Trelew airport** in the Patagonia region of Argentina sixteen guerrilla fighters were massacred by the military government on August 22, 1972, during an alleged prison escape. They were part of a group of twenty-five political prisoners who had escaped from nearby Rawson prison on August 15, planning to capture an airplane to flee the country. Six of the prisoners, led by Santucho, made it to the airport and seized a plane that took them to Chile. The second group of nineteen were delayed, reached the airport after the plane took off, and surrendered without resistance. One week later, the nineteen prisoners were gunned down in an unprovoked attack while being paraded at a naval base at the airport, according to the three survivors.

148. The **Provisionals** resulted from a split in 1969 of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the military arm of the Sinn Fein Party in the Republic of Ireland. The Provisional wing of the IRA gave predominance to guerrilla warfare as opposed to the political struggle to end British domination of Ireland. The other faction called itself the Officials and has since gone through a number of splits, with the organization evolving into a right-wing Stalinist sect.

149. "Letter to Convention from Pierre Frank," *Internal Information Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), no. 6, November 1971, p. 22.

150. "Again, and Always, the Question of the International," *International Information Bulletin*, no. 5, July 1971, p. 4, emphasis in original.

151. *Internal Information Bulletin*, no. 6, November 1971, pp. 21-22, emphasis in original.

152. **Jebrac** was a member of the Ligue Communiste's Political Bureau and the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International. **Anthony, Arthur, and Stephane** were members of the Ligue Communiste's Central Committee.

153. "Is the Question of Power Posed? Let's Pose It!" *Bulletin d'Histoire et de Sociologie du XX Siècle*, no. 30, June 1972, p. 9. This document was later translated in *Internal Information Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), no. 6, November 1973. The page numbers are for the English-language version.

154. *Ibid.*, p. 4. In **France in 1936** the Popular Front government of Léon Blum took office in the midst of the May-June upsurge, a wave of strikes and factory occupations (including the first use of the sit-down strike tactic) involving as many as two million workers at one time—the greatest popular upsurge between the Paris Commune of 1871 and the May-June 1968 revolt. The employers granted some concessions: 7 to 15 percent wage increases, a forty-hour work week with no loss in pay, two-week paid vacations, and de facto recognition of the principle of collective bargaining. The CP campaigned against the upsurge, following the slogan of Maurice Thorez: "It is necessary to know when to end a strike."

155. *Ibid.*

156. *Ibid.*

157. *Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

158. *Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

159. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

160. *Ibid.*

161. *Ibid.*

162. *Ibid.*

163. *Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

164. *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, p. 719.

165. "Is the Question of Power Posed? Let's Pose It!" *Internal Information Bulletin*, no. 6, November 1973, p. 4.

166. *Ibid.*

167. *Ibid.*

168. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

169. *Ibid.* Sixteen Basque nationalists went on trial in **Burgos**, Spain, on December 3, 1970. Six were condemned to death in a December 28 verdict for allegedly having participated in the 1968 killing of the regional head of the secret political police. On December 30, in response to protests throughout Europe, Franco commuted the sentences to thirty years in prison. The June 10, 1972, issue of *Rouge*, the newspaper of the Ligue Communiste, the French section of the Fourth International, carried an article by Daniel Bensaid, a member of the Ligue's Political Bureau, which said: "In December 1970, at the time of the Burgos verdict, the Ligue Communiste supported the attack of a group of militants against the Bank of Spain." In regard to **Indochina**, the May 13, 1972,

issue of *Rouge* reported: "In response to the intensification of imperialist aggression in Indochina, on Wednesday, May 10, at 6:30 a.m. revolutionary militants attacked the offices of Honeywell-Bull and the machine display at the Trade Center. Molotov cocktails were thrown and the machines were seriously damaged. . . . The Ligue Communiste supports and salutes the revolutionary militants who have thus demonstrated their determination not to let the new arrogance of imperialism go unanswered."

170. Ibid.

171. Ibid.

172. Ibid., p. 8.

173. Ibid.

174. Ibid., p. 5.

175. Ibid., p. 11.

176. Ibid.

177. Following this appeal, the **Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency (LTT)** was formed at a meeting in Santiago, Chile, March 5-8, 1973. The following seven points were adopted as the basis for membership: "(1) For approval of the general line of the document 'Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet.' (2) For reversal of the Latin American guerrilla-war orientation adopted at the Third World Congress Since Reunification (Ninth World Congress). (3) For reversal of the projections of this turn in various fields as it became extended both geographically and programmatically following the congress. (4) For resumption by the leading bodies of the Fourth International of the method outlined in the Transitional Program to solve the problems we face in bidding for leadership of the proletariat in the class struggle. (5) For reaffirming the basic program, tradition, and practices of the Fourth International as they stood up to the time of the Third World Congress Since Reunification (Ninth World Congress), that is, specifically, of commitment to the Leninist strategy of building a combat party. The more revolutionary the situation, the more decisive becomes the role of such a party. (6) For democratic organization of the coming world congress. In addition to representation, this means specifically the translation and distribution of the documents in at least French, Spanish, German, and English as well in advance of the congress so that the membership of the Fourth International can have adequate time to study, debate, and decide on them." ("Declaration of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency," *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 3, March 1973, p. 3.) The initial signers included leading members of the Fourth International in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Britain, Canada, Chile, India, Iran, New Zealand, Peru, Spain, Uruguay, and Venezuela, as well as representatives of the Chinese section in exile. Joseph Hansen was among eleven leaders of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party who signed the document as supporters of the Fourth International.

The Underlying Differences in Method

1. Ernest Germain, "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," *International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIDB)*, vol. 10, no. 4, April 1973, p. 3.
2. The call for the formation of a **majority tendency** was issued by nineteen International Executive Committee members on December 3, 1972, during the December 2-6, 1972, plenum of the IEC, and following the call for the formation of a minority tendency in the concluding section of the preceding document, "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet." The declaration of the IEC Majority Tendency was published as an appendix to Ernest Germain's "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International." The basis of the tendency was declared to be agreement with the Germain document as well as support to the resolution "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 5, November 1972, and the resolutions "Bolivia—Results and Perspectives" and "The Political Crisis and Perspectives for Revolutionary Struggle in Argentina," *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 6, April 1973. (These last two resolutions were adopted by a majority at the December 1972 plenum of the IEC.)
3. Joseph Hansen, "In Defense of the Leninist Strategy of Party Building," *International Information Bulletin*, no. 3, April 1971, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America (1968-1972)*, p. 139, and in this volume.
4. Ernest Germain, "In Defence of Leninism," p. 3, emphasis in original.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-25.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
7. The **Socialist Party of Peru** (Partido Socialista del Peru) was established in 1928. Its strength was mainly in the province of Talara. One of its leaders, Luciano Castillo, was elected a senator several times. The group supported the Cuban revolution. The **Social Progressives** (Movimiento Social Progresista—MSP) was formed in 1956. It was a populist-type organization, made up largely of middle-class professionals. Its program emphasized technological advancement as the key to solving Peru's problems. The group essentially fell apart when some leading members, such as Sebastián Salazar Bondy, joined a pro-Cuban group, while others supported the Belaúnde government.
8. On the origins of the Peruvian FIR, see "A Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America," note 29, p. 545.
9. The full text of the Túpac Amaru statement is in the *Militant* (New York), August 13, 1962.
10. **Ismael Frías** joined the Peruvian Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR) in 1952. When the POR split in 1956, Frías led the faction that aligned with the International Secretariat of the Fourth International. He projected entry of the POR into the bourgeois APRA party. In 1960, differences with Juan Posadas resulted in Frías leading a split to form

another group, also called the POR, which published *Obrero y Campesino*. This group dissolved, and Frías, by 1966 no longer considering himself a Trotskyist, formed a group called the Liga Socialista Revolucionaria, which endorsed General Juan Velasco's military regime. The Liga no longer functioned by 1971, and by that time, Frías had become influential in the Velasco government and was named a member of the Secretariat of Social Mobilization, a formation established to organize mass support for the Velasco government.

11. *Militant*, August 13, 1962.

12. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 20, emphasis in original.

13. **José Martorell** was a Spaniard who was active in the Argentine Trotskyist movement and in SLATO (Secretariado Latinoamericano del Trotskyismo—Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyism). He arrived in Peru late in 1961 along with Nahuel Moreno, Eduardo Creus, and Daniel Pereyra to aid the Peruvian POR. **Antonio Aragón** was the main leader of the POR in Lima in 1960-61. After the arrival in Peru of the SLATO representatives he accompanied Daniel Pereyra to Cuzco, where he worked to build the FIR.

14. Hugo Blanco, *Land or Death: the Peasant Struggle in Peru* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972), p. 39.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.

16. Germain, "In Defence of Leninism," p. 20.

17. Blanco, *Land or Death*, pp. 87-89.

18. Germain, "In Defence of Leninism," p. 21.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 22. The Chinese revolution of 1925-27 began with a general strike in May 1925, sparked by the shooting of workers in Shanghai by British troops. But the main unfolding of the revolution took shape around the Northern Expedition of **Chiang Kai-shek's troops**, beginning from a small territory around Canton in July 1926 and seeking to conquer the various proimperialist warlord regimes of the north and unify the country. Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975) became the principal military leader of the Kuomintang (KMT), or Nationalist Party, on the death of its founder, Sun Yat-sen, in 1925. On orders of the Communist International, under Stalin's influence, the Chinese Communist Party had joined the KMT in 1923 and participated in the revolution of the 1920s as a faction of the KMT. The march northward of Chiang's army raised peasant and worker expectations and led to workers' uprisings and peasant land seizures on a massive scale. The revolution was crushed when the CCP, after leading a successful workers' insurrection in Shanghai in March 1927, before the arrival of the Northern Expedition troops, decided to welcome Chiang's forces into the city. The KMT leadership, fearful of the growing power of the CCP, turned on the Shanghai workers in early April in a brutal massacre. The CCP, at Stalin's insistence, did not break from the KMT at that time but regrouped its forces around a reformist "left-wing" faction of the KMT that had established a separate government at Wuhan, headed by Wang Ching-wei. Wang also turned on the CCP, in July 1927, paving the way for the reunification of the KMT later that year

and the outlawing of the CCP. In July 1926 the CCP, with already more than 20,000 members, controlled trade unions with 1.25 million members. By March 1927, at its height for that period, the CCP had 57,000 members and led unions of 3 million. (See *The Long March to Power: A History of the Chinese Communist Party, 1921-72* by James Pinckney Harrison [New York: Praeger, 1972], pp. 62, 86, and 98-99.)

20. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 22.

21. During the period when the CCP entry into the Kuomintang was being cemented, **Chiang Kai-shek was sent to Moscow** and spent three months there at the end of 1923. **Hu Han-min** (1879-1936) was a central leader of the right wing of the KMT. He was in Moscow from October 1925 to April 1926 to study party organization. While there he attended the Third Congress of the Comintern in February 1926, where he applied to the Comintern for admission for the Kuomintang and made a speech calling for "world revolution." He briefly headed the Chiang Kai-shek government in the spring and summer of 1927 during the bloodbath against the Chinese Communist Party.

22. Leon Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin*, 3rd ed. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), pp. 185-86.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 336.

24. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 22.

25. **Peter Camejo** (1939-) joined the Socialist Workers Party in 1959. He was a national leader of the Young Socialist Alliance in the early 1960s and a well-known campus leader at the University of California at Berkeley during the antiwar movement. He is a National Committee member of the SWP. In 1976 he was the SWP's candidate for U.S. president.

26. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 23, emphasis in original.

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

29. *Ibid.*

30. *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 1, January 1973, pp. 22-23, also in this volume.

31. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 14. The Partido Obrero Revolucionario of Bolivia led by Hugo González Moscoso frequently used the name of its newspaper, **Combate**, after its name to distinguish itself from the POR led by Guillermo Lora. Outside of Bolivia the groups were more often referred to as the POR (Lora) and the POR (González).

32. "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet," p. 41.

33. *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 8, June 1973.

34. *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 14, August 1973.

35. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 5.

36. "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," *IIDB*, vol. 9, no. 5, November 1972.

37. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 41, emphasis in original.

38. In the first days of the Banzer coup, four Trotskyists were killed in battle as the POR (González) led a force of some 5,000 members of various left groups in an unsuccessful assault on the Miraflores military fortress.

The leftists, 90 percent of them unarmed, lost 150 dead and 600 wounded. In Santa Cruz, the other area of heavy fighting, the regional POR leadership was wiped out.

39. This was the letter signed "Domingo," reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*, pp. 167-71.

40. May 11, 1971, letter from the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 173. This collection contains the text of the secret letter, the protest of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, a statement by the United Secretariat on the matter, and Livio Maitan's reply.

41. "In Defence of Leninism," pp. 10-11.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

43. "The OLAS Conference—Tactics and Strategy of a Continental Revolution," *International Socialist Review* (New York), November-December 1967, p. 8. This article is reprinted in Joseph Hansen's *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1978).

44. *Ibid.*

45. *Ibid.*, p. 9

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

49. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 25.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

51. In June 1964 the majority of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP—Ceylon Equal Society Party), the **Ceylonese Trotskyist organization**, voted to join the capitalist Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the pro-Moscow Communist Party in setting up a coalition government. The LSSP was the oldest and largest working-class party in Ceylon. It had a mass following in the trade unions and several members of parliament before this betrayal. The United Secretariat warned against this move, sided with the left wing in fighting against it at the conference where it was adopted, and expelled the LSSP from the Fourth International when it joined the government. (The left wing reconstituted itself as the LSSP [Revolutionary] and remained within the International.) **Sirimavo Bandaranaike** (1916-) was prime minister, 1960-65, and again from 1970 to 1977. In 1971 the LSSP leaders supported her in imposing an austerity plan and in the declaration of martial law and the armed government attack on the radical student movement, which led to thousands of arrests. The LSSP cabinet members were dropped in 1975.

52. **Pierre Lambert** was active in the Trotskyist movement in the underground in France under the Nazi occupation during World War II. He was at that time a member of the Comité Communiste Internationaliste (CCI), which descended from the organization led by Raymond Molinier and Pierre Frank, who had split from the Fourth International in 1936. In February 1944 the CCI fused with the Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste (POI) and the Groupe Octobre to create the Parti Communiste

Internationaliste (PCI), which became the postwar section of the Fourth International. Lambert became an important leader of the French section in the fight against Pablo, which began in France at the initiative of Marcel Bleibtreu in 1950. The majority of the French section concluded that Pablo's theory of "war-revolution" contained an adaptation to Stalinism and on those grounds opposed the entry tactic. At the Tenth Plenum of the IEC in February 1952 the IEC voted to reorganize the French Political Bureau, giving the leadership to the pro-Pablo minority led by Pierre Frank and setting up a parity commission in which a representative of the International Secretariat, Ernest Mandel, had deciding vote. In June 1952 the majority of the French section was expelled for refusing to carry out the entry tactic. The expelled organization, led by Bleibtreu, Lambert, and Michel Lequenne, adhered to the International Committee faction when it was declared at the end of 1953. In 1963 this group, with Lambert by then its central leader, refused to participate in the reunification of the Fourth International and remained in a bloc with Healy's Socialist Labour League in Britain. In 1965 the French ex-PCI majority renamed itself the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI—Internationalist Communist Organization). In 1971 the SLL and the OCI split. In July 1972 the OCI and several other groups formed their own international organization, the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI). In 1973 the OCRFI proposed that it participate in the discussion prior to the 1974 world congress of the Fourth International, but its request was denied. Following a lengthy correspondence, a political discussion was opened between the OCRFI and the Fourth International in 1977. This has led to the exploring of areas of political agreement and to the possibilities of fusion in several countries.

53. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 26.

54. *Letters from Prison*, 2nd ed. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1973), pp. 309-10.

55. The **incipient faction** in the SWP was led by Albert Goldman and Felix Morrow, both of whom were among the seventeen SWP leaders imprisoned with Cannon in 1944-45 for their opposition to World War II. Goldman had been Trotsky's American attorney and was chief defense counsel in the trial of the eighteen in Minneapolis in 1941. Morrow had been editor of the *Militant* and of the party's theoretical magazine, *Fourth International*. Morrow and Goldman became pessimistic about the prospects for socialism at the end of the war and developed an extreme Stalinophobia that led them in the end to the support of American capitalism as a "lesser evil." Shortly after their release from prison in January 1945 they established covert relations with Max Shachtman's Workers Party, the group that had split from the SWP in 1940. Shachtman's rejection of the defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack provided the basis for Goldman and Morrow's attraction to the WP. Goldman quit the SWP in May 1946 to join the WP. In 1948 he went on to join the Socialist Party, and then he renounced Marxism altogether.

Morrow was expelled from the SWP at its November 1946 convention for unauthorized collaboration with Shachtman. He then withdrew from politics.

56. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 37.

57. The **Young Socialists** /Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes (YS/LJS) was the youth group in solidarity with the LSA/LSO (League for Socialist Action / Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière), at that time the Canadian section of the Fourth International. **Labor Challenge** was the LSA/LSO's bi-weekly newspaper. The **New Democratic Party** (NDP) is Canada's trade-union-based labor party. It was founded in 1961.

58. **Alain Beiner**, a former editor of *Libération*, was then a candidate for parliament from Montréal. His article, "Trois membres quittent la LSO," appeared in the September/October 1972 *Libération*, the French-language monthly of the LSO in Québec. In it he explained why a tendency led by Michel Mill had quit the LSA/LSO before there could be a full discussion and vote on its views. In particular, the Mill group disagreed with the LSA/LSO's position on the national struggle in Québec.

59. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 35.

60. Ibid., emphasis in original.

61. U.S. government plans for the nuclear bomb test at **Amchitka** in Alaska sparked mass protests across Canada, including a "Shutdown for Survival" called by the British Columbia Federation of Labor on November 3, 1971, the first such political protest strike in Canada since an antiwar strike in 1919. The Amchitka blast coincided with antiwar protests across the U.S. on November 6, 1971.

62. "Trotskyists Hold Cross-Canada Convention," *Intercontinental Press*, May 21, 1973, p. 602.

63. **Michel Mill** split from the LSA/LSO in Québec in July 1972 with ten people, founding the Groupe Marxiste Révolutionnaire. The **Old Mole** was a student radical group at the University of Toronto that published an irregular newspaper of the same name, beginning in September 1972. The **Red Circle** was a group that came out of the left wing in the New Democratic Party in English Canada. In May 1973 the Old Mole and the Red Circle fused to form the Revolutionary Marxist Group. The following month the Revolutionary Communist Tendency split from the LSA/LSO to join the RMG. The RMG soon established a loose federation with the GMR in Québec. The relations between the LSA/LSO and the RMG/GMR were deeply embittered for some years after the split of 1972-73 and the unity proposals of that time advanced by the RMG and its predecessor organizations were aimed at winning over members from the LSA/LSO, not at an actual unification. After the dissolution in 1977 of the two main factions in the Fourth International that had been generated by the dispute over guerrilla warfare, serious discussion of unity began among the Canadian Trotskyists. On February 17, 1977, the Political Committee of the RMG adopted a resolution "On LSA/LSO-RMG Relations," which said in part: "At the time of the RMG's formation, most comrades thought

that a split of the Fourth International was both inevitable and, in certain respects, desirable. The project of building a new Trotskyist organization in Canada was closely related to this view. Subsequently, there was a move away from this position. . . . Now, our turn vis-a-vis the LSA/LSO demands the codification of a position on the unity of the International" (RMG *National Bulletin*, no. 5 in 1977, reprinted in *International Internal Information Bulletin*, [New York: Socialist Workers Party], no. 4, August 1977, p. 7). The three Canadian Trotskyist organizations, after conventions of their own, held a unification conference on August 8, 1977, which founded the Revolutionary Workers League / Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire, which became the Canadian section of the Fourth International.

64. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 32.

65. **Khvostism** is the Russian word for tail-endism.

66. J. Montero, "The International Undermined by Reformism," *Internal Information Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), no. 10, December 1973.

67. Bret Smiley and Walter Davis, "Social Democracy and the LSA," *League for Socialist Action / Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière Discussion Bulletin*, no. 29, February 1973, p. 13.

68. "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," p. 48.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 46, emphasis in original.

70. The **Marlenites** were a sectarian group that left the Trotskyist movement in 1935 in opposition to the proposed entry into the Socialist Party. They were led by George Spiro, whose pseudonym was George Marlen. They formed the Leninist League (1937-46) and then the Workers League for a Revolutionary Party (1946-50). Over time they rejected first Trotsky, then Lenin, and finally Marx and Engels.

71. The **International Left Opposition** was the international faction formed by Trotsky in 1930; its goal was to change the Comintern, which it viewed as centrist, back into a revolutionary party. After the defeat in Germany in 1933, when no forces in the Comintern stood up against Stalin's disastrous policies, Trotsky declared the Comintern politically dead and called for a new International. The International Left Opposition then became the International Communist League, and, in 1936, the Movement for the Fourth International. The Fourth International was established in 1938. The **French turn** was an entry tactic proposed by Trotsky to help build the French Communist League in 1934. The tiny group in France faced deepening isolation during a period of decisive class battles led by the big reformist CP and SFIO (the Socialist Party of France). The two mass parties were discussing a merger and had made a united-front agreement. In order to reach the leftward-moving workers in the united front and to try to head off this merger, Trotsky urged the Communist League to briefly enter the SFIO. The French Trotskyists did this in August 1934. The same tactic was later used by sections in Belgium, Switzerland, Poland, and the United States.

72. **George S. McGovern** (1922-), senator from South Dakota, was Democratic Party candidate for U.S. president in 1972, losing to Richard M. Nixon.

73. "A Talk with Defenders of Economism," December 6, 1901, *Collected Works*, vol. 5, p. 317.

74. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 43. **George Breitman** (1916-) joined the Workers Party of the United States, the name at that time of the American Trotskyist organization, in 1935. He was editor of the *Militant*, 1941-43 and 1949-54. He is an editor of the English-language edition of Trotsky's writings and has edited books by Malcolm X. The writings Germain refers to include the pamphlet *How a Minority Can Change Society: The Real Potential of the Afro-American Struggle* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 6th printing, 1975, and the article "The Current Radicalization Compared with Those of the Past" in Jack Barnes, et al., *Towards an American Socialist Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971).

75. Ibid.

76. *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 10, July 1973.

77. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 44, emphasis in original.

78. Ibid., p. 43.

79. English translation, *International Information Bulletin*, no. 4, October 1972, reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*.

80. The **self-criticism** on the relations with the PRT (*Combatiente*) was made in the "Statement by Sandor on behalf of those IEC members who voted for the general line of the Latin American resolution at 1969 World Congress," issued at the December 2-6, 1972, meeting of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International and published in *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 6, April 1973. This statement said in part that "the comrades who voted for the Latin American resolution at the Ninth World Congress committed an error in not opening up a fraternal discussion sooner in our movement on the ideological positions of the Argentine section, in particular, on Maoism, the military intervention in Czechoslovakia, and the road toward building a mass revolutionary International, positions with which they are in complete disagreement. These comrades hereby make a self-criticism in this regard and promise to begin a discussion on these questions with the Argentine comrades and throughout the International, in the context of preparing for the Tenth World Congress."

81. See *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 5, April 1973.

82. "Political Crisis and Revolutionary Struggle in Argentina," *Intercontinental Press*, April 26, 1971, p. 388.

83. See "Press Conference of the ERP," *Intercontinental Press*, June 18, 1973.

84. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 49.

85. Ibid.

86. "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America," *Discussion on Latin America*, pp. 17-18, also reprinted in this volume.

87. "Report on the 1969 World Congress of the Fourth International," *ibid.*, p. 54, also reprinted in this volume.

88. **George Novack** (1905-) joined the American Trotskyist movement in 1933. He was a leader of defense efforts for Leon Trotsky during the Moscow trials and for the Minneapolis case defendants during World War II. He is the author of numerous books on Marxist philosophy and historical materialism.

89. "Two Lines, Two Methods," *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 3, March 1973, p. 33.

90. *Ibid.*

91. **Dialectical materialism** is the philosophical world view of Marx and Engels, encompassing both nature and society. It is materialist in that it postulates the existence of matter prior to humanity and views material conditions as the underlying cause and determinant of society and mind; it is dialectical in that it postulates the study of matter in motion and transformation by way of contradiction from one form or state to another. In contrast to metaphysical modes of thought, which isolate particular moments or aspects of a phenomenon, dialectical materialism always seeks to examine its objects in a historical context, tracing its origins and roots in order better to gauge the course of its future development.

92. **RYM I**, part of the majority of the SDS convention of 1969, split and went underground in 1970, with a program of urban guerrilla warfare. It took the name Weatherman (later Weatherpeople or Weather Underground Organization) and carried out or was blamed for a number of bombings in the early 1970s. In 1975 Jeff Jones, one of its leaders, formulated a plan to bring the group out of hiding; other leaders, including Bernardine Dohrn, attacked the plan, which apparently involved overtures to the Democratic Party. The group split apart in 1977.

93. See "Resolution on New Rise of the World Revolution," *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1969, pp. 672-74.

94. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 17.

95. In the course of its 1973 election campaign, the PST grew from 500 to 2,000, and increased its number of locals from ten to seventy.

96. **Isaac Deutscher** (1907-1967) was a Marxist historian and the author of a three-volume biography of Trotsky. He joined the illegal Polish Communist Party in 1927 and rapidly became the chief editor of its underground press. He was expelled in 1932 as a supporter of the Left Opposition, but left the Trotskyist movement in 1938 because he disagreed with the founding of the Fourth International. In the postwar period he held the view that the Soviet Communist Party contained within it forces that could regenerate the party, and his name became associated with the perspective of the "self-reform of Stalinism." In his last years Deutscher moved closer to Trotsky's position that Stalinism could be removed only through an antibureaucratic revolution, although he never fully committed himself to this perspective.

97. For Joseph Hansen's analysis of this process, see "The Problem of Eastern Europe," *Internal Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party),

vol. 12, no. 2, February 1950, reprinted in *Class, Party, and State and the Eastern European Revolution*, an Education for Socialists bulletin (New York: Socialist Workers Party, 1969).

98. **Josip Broz Tito** (1892-) has been the head of the Yugoslav government since 1945. He fought with the Soviet Red Army under Trotsky in the Russian civil war, was imprisoned in Croatia, 1929-34, and served as an agent of the Soviet secret police in Spain during the Spanish civil war. He led a partisan movement in Yugoslavia against the Nazi occupation during World War II that brought him to power in 1945. The fact that his party had led a socialist revolution, combined with Tito's public break with Stalin in 1948, led to the brief emergence of an independent "Titoist" current in the world Communist movement. In 1951 the Third World Congress of the Fourth International adopted by an overwhelming majority resolutions that characterized the Tito leadership as "centrist," meaning by this that Titoism had broken from Stalinism as well as from Stalin and that the Yugoslav CP through a process of reform could potentially become a revolutionary Marxist organization. During the years of the split in the International after 1953 the Socialist Workers Party, on the basis of further experience with the Titoist current, in particular Tito's support to American imperialism in the Korean War, concluded that despite the break from Moscow, the Yugoslav CP was neither revolutionary, nor democratic, nor centrist, and that an anti-bureaucratic revolution was required in Yugoslavia as well as in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The SWP drew the same conclusion about the Mao regime in China, which had also been characterized as centrist by the Fourth International in 1951.

99. **Arne Swabeck** (1890-) was a founder of the American Communist Party in 1919 and one of the earliest leaders of the American Trotskyist movement. In 1959 he proposed that the SWP adopt a position of "critical support" to the Mao government in China. By the early 1960s Swabeck moved to a stand of unqualified endorsement of Maoism. He was expelled from the SWP in 1967 for violations of party discipline and was later briefly associated with the U.S. pro-Maoist Progressive Labor Party.

100. The **Algerian revolution** began in 1954 when Algerian liberation forces intensified a struggle to win independence from French colonial rule. A mobilization of the masses under the leadership of a petty-bourgeois nationalist formation, the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN—National Liberation Front) and its military arm, the Armée de Libération Nationale (ALN—National Liberation Army) succeeded in driving the French out and winning independence in 1962. **Ahmed Ben Bella** (1919-), backed by the ALN, became premier in 1963. Under Ben Bella, the masses maintained their organizations and far-reaching social measures were enacted. The Fourth International's assessment was that a workers' and farmers' government existed, bearing many similarities to the one in the early stages of the Cuban revolution. A coup on June

19, 1965, replaced Ben Bella with a former aide, Houari Boumedienne, overturning the workers' and farmers' government and decisively reversing the momentum toward a socialist revolution. Before the reunification of the Fourth International, the International Secretariat faction had done extensive support work in Europe for the Algerian FLN, including raising funds. Pablo personally headed this work, as a result of which he obtained a post as an adviser in the Ben Bella government. Pablo's refusal to seek to build a section of the Fourth International in Algeria independent of the FLN was a principal issue in his expulsion from the Fourth International in 1965.

101. **Michèle Mestre** was the principal leader, with Pierre Frank, of the minority in the French section of the Fourth International in 1952 that supported Pablo's tactic of entryism sui generis. When the majority of the section was expelled by Pablo in June 1952 she was a member of the Political Bureau of the reorganized section, with Pierre Frank as secretary. She split from the Fourth International in a walk-out at the 1954 world congress of the International Secretariat faction and joined the French Communist Party. **Jock Haston** split from the Militant Group, then the main British Trotskyist organization, in 1937 to help found the Workers International League. The WIL boycotted the founding conference of the Fourth International, but rejoined through a fusion with the Revolutionary Socialist League, the official section, in 1944, creating the Revolutionary Communist Party. Haston was the main leader of the RCP until 1949, when the party voted to enter the British Labour Party. At that time Haston broke with the Trotskyists in the Labour Party and became a Labour Party politician.

102. The **Hungarian uprising** began when secret police fired on students demanding democratic rights on October 24, 1956, and Russian tanks and artillery attacked a mass demonstration on October 25, killing and wounding hundreds of unarmed people. At that point the workers, inspired also by the uprising of the Polish workers a few days earlier, went into the streets. The Central Committee of the Hungarian CP appointed Imre Nagy premier; he initially called on the workers to lay down their arms. Later he hailed the workers and promised concessions. The workers set up local revolutionary councils, took control of a large section of the country, and battled several divisions of Soviet troops. They demanded withdrawal of the troops, dissolution of the secret police, and free general elections. The movement, spearheaded by a general strike, issued leaflets calling for democratic socialism. The armed revolt was crushed in a few weeks. Nagy's government was replaced by the regime of Janos Kadar. The workers' councils and strike continued into December. After a two-day nationwide general strike December 11-12, Kadar decreed martial law, forced the workers' leadership underground, and outlawed the workers' councils. The International Secretariat faction gave full support to the Hungarian workers' councils, rather than hailing the concessions granted by the bureaucracy as Pablo had done after the Berlin events of 1953.

103. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 44.

104. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

105. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

106. *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 3, March 1973, pp. 5-31. **Mary-Alice Waters** (1942-) joined the Trotskyist movement in 1962. She was part of the team of reporters headed by Joseph Hansen that covered the May-June 1968 events in France for the world Trotskyist press, and was later editor of the *Militant*, 1971-78. Waters is a member of the Political Committee of the SWP and was elected as a fraternal member—without decisive vote, because of reactionary legislation barring the SWP from membership in the Fourth International—of the International Executive Committee of the FI at the 1969 world congress. She became a fraternal member of the United Secretariat at the October 1971 meeting of the IEC. She is the editor of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.

107. "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," *IIDB*, vol. 9, no. 5, November 1972, p. 14.

108. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

109. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

110. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

111. "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," *IIDB*, vol. 9, no. 5, November 1972, p. 24.

112. On June 21, 1973, the Ligue Communiste, the French section of the Fourth International, led a violent counterdemonstration against a fascist mass meeting in Paris. The French government seized on this pretext to issue a **ban on the Ligue Communiste** on June 28, and on June 29 a police dragnet broke into sixty-five apartments in and around Paris looking for Ligue leaders. **Pierre Rousset** (1946-) joined the Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire in 1965. He was a member of the Political Bureau of the Ligue Communiste at the time of his arrest. He was elected to the IEC and to the United Secretariat at the 1974 world congress. He was released following his June 1973 arrest on August 31. Krivine, who had been out of the city on June 21, was charged under the "antiwrecker" law of 1970, which provided for up to a five-year prison term for leaders of an illegal demonstration where there was harm to persons or property, whether or not the leaders were personally involved in any violent acts. Krivine was released on bail August 2. The ban was never rescinded; the ex-Ligue members formed the Front Communiste Révolutionnaire in April 1974, which ran Krivine for president that year, and then formed the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire in December 1974.

113. "Press Interview With Alain Krivine," *Intercontinental Press*, July 9, 1973, pp. 829-30.

114. **Georges Pompidou** (1911-1974), a former aide to General de Gaulle and director general of the Rothschild banking firm, was president of France, 1969-74. Minister of the Interior **Raymond Marcellin**, a former official in the Vichy government and author of a book on the

"international leftist plot," was responsible for the mobilization of 2,000 police to defend the June 21 fascist meeting.

115. See "Is the Question of Power Posed? Let's Pose It!" *Bulletin d'Histoire et de Sociologie du XX Siècle*, no. 30, and the modified positions of the same authors in "One Point, That's All." *Bulletin d'Histoire*, no. 38, both translated in *Internal Information Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), no. 6, November 1973.

116. "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet," *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 1, January 1973, p. 54, reprinted in this volume.

117. "The Building of a Revolutionary Party in Capitalist America," political counterresolution submitted by the Internationalist Tendency, *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, vol. 31, no. 18, July 1973, p. 4.

118. **Trotsky disagreed with Lenin** in the 1903 split of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, siding with the Mensheviks for a time and trying to moderate the dispute and bring the two factions together. He believed that Lenin's concept of revolutionary centralism would lead to a party that substitutes itself for the masses and is internally undemocratic. He soon broke with the Mensheviks on other issues, but did not change his position on the organization question and join the Bolsheviks until 1917.

119. "In Defence of Leninism," p. 48, emphasis in original.

120. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

Armed Struggle in Latin America

1. The resolution "Armed Struggle in Latin America" and the "Report on Armed Struggle in Latin America" by Roman were published in *Intercontinental Press*, December 23, 1974.

2. Leon Trotsky, "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," in *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, 3rd ed. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1977), pp. 125-26, emphasis in original.

3. The **Leninist-Trotskyist Faction** was organized in August 1973 by the former Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency in response to the discovery that the IEC Majority Tendency had been functioning as a secret faction which had disciplinary requirements for membership and which carried on its own internal discussion outside of the elected leadership bodies of the Fourth International. The founding document of the LTF appears in the *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, vol. 10, no. 15, October 1973, under the title "The New Situation in the Fourth International."

4. "Armed Struggle in Latin America," *Intercontinental Press*, December 23, 1974, p. 1802.

5. Admiral **Luis Carrero Blanco** (1903-1973), Franco's closest aide, was appointed premier in June 1973; he was also head of the armed forces and the National Movement, Franco's party. He was assassinated in Madrid on December 20, 1973, by Basque terrorists in retaliation for the

killing of nine Basque militants and in protest of the repression in Spain. *Red Weekly* was the newspaper of the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International.

Report on the 1974 World Congress of the Fourth International

1. The February 1974 world congress was attended by 250 persons, representing organizations in forty-one countries. In comparison, the April 1969 world congress was attended by 100 representatives from thirty countries.

2. The **desertion of the PRT (Combatiente)** was formalized by its Executive Committee at its meeting in July 1973.

3. The final version of this document, as adopted by a majority at the 1974 world congress, appears in *Intercontinental Press*, December 23, 1974.

4. See "The Barzman Letter" and Jack Barnes's "The Meaning of the Barzman Letter: A Secret Faction in the Fourth International," in *SWP Discussion Bulletin* (New York), vol. 31, no. 27, July 1973, and "Secret Factionalism—A Threat to the Unity of the Fourth International," *Internal Information Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), no. 7, July 1974.

5. See "Recommendations to the Delegates of the Coming World Congress," *International Internal Discussion Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), vol. 10, no. 15, October 1973, p. 15.

6. **Jack Barnes** (1940-) has been national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party since 1972. He visited Cuba in 1960 and became a founder of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, joined the Young Socialist Alliance in 1961, and was elected its national chairman in 1965. He was elected a fraternal member of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International at the 1969 world congress and became a fraternal member of the United Secretariat at the October 1971 meeting of the IEC.

7. The **Mezhrayonka Tendency** platform was published in *IIDB*, vol. 11, no. 5, April 1974, p. 15. The name *Mezhrayonka* was taken from that of the group led by Trotsky in Russia, the *Mezhrayontsi* (Inter-District Organization), which fused with the Bolsheviks at their congress of July-August 1917.

8. The **Kompass Tendency** in Germany was formed in September 1973. See "Declaration of the Compass Tendency," *Internal Information Bulletin*, no. 10, December 1973, pp. 11-12; "On Latin America: The Orientation of the Fourth International," *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 22, November 1973; and "Draft for Revision of the European Perspectives Document: 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe,'" *IIDB*, vol. 10, no. 25, December 1973.

9. **Kailas Chandra** is a pseudonym of Sitiram B. Kolpe. He joined the

Trotskyist movement in India in 1939. He was a member of the Bolshevik Leninist Party of India, formed in May 1942 by leaders of the Ceylon Lanka Sama Samaja Party who had escaped internment in Ceylon during World War II. The BLPI was dissolved in the early 1950s to enter the Socialist Party (later the Praja Socialist Party and the Samyukta Socialist Party). Kolpe, who supported the International Secretariat during the split in the Fourth International, played an important role in the efforts to rebuild an independent Indian Trotskyist organization at the end of the 1950s. He was a founding leader of the Revolutionary Workers Party of India in 1958. The RWPI carried out an unsuccessful merger with the Revolutionary Communist Party of India, 1960-63, after which scattered groups of Trotskyists reorganized as the Socialist Workers Party of India, beginning in 1965. The SWPI changed its name to the Communist League in January 1972. Kolpe was the long-time secretary of the All-India Union of Journalists. In the summer of 1975 the newspaper of the journalists' union, the Bombay weekly *Clarity*, came out in support of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's declaration of martial law and suspension of civil liberties. For his endorsement of this line, Kolpe was expelled from the Indian Trotskyist movement in 1976.

10. See "Agreement on Measures to Help Maintain Unity of the Fourth International," *Internal Information Bulletin*, no. 4, April 1974, p. 11.

Appendix III: Meaning of the Self-Criticism on Latin America

1. "Is the Question of Power Posed? Let's Pose It!" is translated in *Internal Information Bulletin* (New York: Socialist Workers Party), no. 6, November 1973, pp. 3-11.

2. See "On Tactics in Europe," *Intercontinental Press*, March 23, 1970, p. 229. The original world congress resolution and report are reprinted in the *International Information Bulletin* collection *Discussion on Europe (1968-1971)* (New York: Socialist Workers Party, 1972).

3. "Statement on the Self-Criticism Document on Latin America of the Steering Committee of the IMT," by Livio, *IIDB*, vol. 13, no. 8, December 1976, p. 11.

4. This document is translated in *Discussion on Latin America (1968-1972)* (New York: Socialist Workers Party, 1972).

5. *Quatrième Internationale*, July 1969, p. 21, emphasis added.

6. The FUR (Frente de Unidade Revolucionária—Front for Revolutionary Unity) was a coalition dominated by centrist and center-left groups formed in Portugal in August 1975. The FUR gave critical support to the capitalist fifth provisional government of the Movimento das Forças Armadas (MFA—Armed Forces Movement). The FUR in particular gave backing to the "left" wing of the military government, represented by Copcon (Comando Operacional do Continente—Mainland Portugal Operations Command), around Copcon's proposal to build "people's power"

committees under the control of the MFA. The FUR was dominated by the Partido Revolucionário do Proletariado (PRP—Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat) and the Movimento de Esquerda Socialista (MES—Movement of the Socialist Left). Included in the coalition were the Movimento Democrático Português (MDP—Portuguese Democratic Movement), a CP front, and the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI—Internationalist Communist League), the Portuguese sympathizing organization of the Fourth International.

7. The **Union of the Left** was a class-collaborationist electoral bloc of the French CP, SP, and Left Radicals. It was formed after the CP and SP signed a common program in June 1972 with the aim of drawing in bourgeois support for a bloc like the People's Front of the 1930s. The bloc was consummated when the Left Radicals, a small bourgeois party, signed the program. The Ligue Communiste argued that because the bourgeois component of the Union of the Left was small compared to the Radicals in the 1930s (the Radical Party was then the main bourgeois party), the bloc was really working-class; for that reason they called for a vote for the Union of the Left rather than for the candidates of the CP and SP alone.

8. The **Brest-Litovsk** treaty, which ended the war between Germany and the Soviet Union in March 1918, was the subject of a sharp struggle at the Seventh Party Congress. A faction headed by Lenin felt that the Soviet Union was so weak militarily that once the negotiations reached a showdown, it had no choice but to accept the treaty on very unfavorable terms. Another faction, the "Left Communists," headed by Bukharin and Radek, said that as a matter of principle the Soviet Union must declare a revolutionary war, not sign the treaty. Trotsky, who was the chief negotiator, had a third position. He opposed continuing the war, but proposed to sign the unfavorable treaty only after German military threats or action had demonstrated that the Soviet government signed under duress. When Germany launched an offensive Trotsky voted with Lenin to give him a majority against the "Left Communists."

9. *Intercontinental Press*, September 27, 1976, pp. 1362-65, and October 4, 1976, pp. 1404-6.

10. *Discussion on Latin America*, p. 16.

11. "The Unfolding New World Situation," in *Dynamics of World Revolution Today* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1974), p. 98.

12. Both documents are reprinted in *Discussion on Latin America*; the document by Joseph Hansen is also reprinted earlier in this volume.

13. "Prospects for Socialism in America" is reprinted in *Prospects for Socialism in America*, Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters, eds. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1976).

14. *Quatrième Internationale*, July 1969, p. 21.

15. **Alan Jones** is a leader of the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International, and a member of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. He was a prominent member of the IMT.

16. The **Francoist regime** of King Juan Carlos and Premier Carlos Arias (whose cabinet was installed in December 1975) was rocked by strikes and protests demanding democratic rights. Arias resigned in July 1976 and was replaced by Adolfo Suárez González, former head of Franco's political organization, the National Movement. He won a rigged election the following year.

Index

- AD (Acción Democrática—Democratic Action, Venezuela), 481
- "Against Boycott" (Lenin), 107-9
- Agrarian reform, 221
- Aidit, D. N., 177, 560n
- Algeria, 411, 588-89n
- Ali, Tariq, 143-44, 317, 556n
- ALN (Acção Libertadora Nacional—Action for National Liberation, Brazil), 550n
- Amchitka (Alaska), 378, 584n
- Anarchism, 167
- Antiwar movement, 378, 385-88
- APRA (Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana—People's Revolutionary American Alliance, Peru), 481, 541n
- April Theses (Lenin), 191, 564n
- Aragón, Antonio, 348, 580n
- Aramburu, Pedro Eugenio, 263, 571n
- "Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet," 24, 208-332, 358-59, 425
- Argentina, 96, 254-55, 294, 308, 447; assassinations by guerrillas in, 272, 300-303, 572n; balance sheet on guerrilla warfare and party building in, 223, 254-311; labor movement in, 255-60, 262-63, 264, 265, 270-72; repression in, 82, 256, 310-11, 576n. *See also* Christian Democratic Party; Communist Party (Argentina); Cordobazo; ERP; FAR; GAN; Interunion group; MO; Montoneros; PCR; Peronists; PO; PRT; PSA; PST; Rocazo; Rosariazo; SITRAC; SITRAM; Workers' and Socialist Pole
- Arias, Carlos, 595n
- Arisemendi, Rodney, 103, 155, 481, 547n
- Armed struggle: Bolsheviks and, 11; discussion on, at 1974 world congress of Fourth International, 434, 453-58; Germain and Knoeller on strategy of, 163-64; Germain and Knoeller's variants of, 184-90; Guevara and, 296; IMT self-criticism on, 497-502; Latin America resolution on, 476-77, 478-81, 483; vs. peaceful coexistence, 21, 63, 70, 155-57; strategy of, vs. party-building program, 44-45, 181-82, 508, 510; and Transitional Program, 114-15, 296; Trotsky on, 114-15; Weatherman on, 134-35. *See also* Guerrilla warfare
- "Armed Struggle in Latin America," 26, 446, 447; discussion on, at 1974 world congress, 453-58; extends beyond Latin America, 434, 438, 454-55; IMT self-criticism on, 497-502; LTF criticisms of, 437-41; and minority violence, 446
- Army: mass movement appeals to, in Argentina, 261, 272; need to win ranks of, in Bolivia, 232, 233, 238, 239; and Russian revolution (1917), 561n; Trotsky on, 245-47
- Assassinations: by Argentine guerrillas, 263, 272, 300-303, 572n; by Bolivian government, 229; of Carrero Blanco (Spain), 440-41, 455-56, 591-92n; by FLQ (Québec), 143; of Iribarren (Venezuela), 303, 575n
- "Assessment of the Draft Resolution On Latin America" (Hansen), 23, 81-82, 122-23, 124, 179, 203
- Avanzada Socialista*, 294
- Bandaranaike, Sirimavo, 373, 582n
- Banzer Suárez, Hugo, 233, 249, 569n
- Barnes, Jack, 28, 447-48, 490n, 592n
- Barrientos, René, 227-29, 567n
- Barzman letter, 444
- Bay of Pigs, 34, 535n
- Beiner, Alain, 377, 584n
- Béjar, Héctor, 87, 88, 94-95, 96, 156, 180, 200, 544n
- Ben Bella, Ahmed, 411, 588-89n
- Bengochea, Angel, 96, 547n
- Berrigan, Daniel, 133, 553n
- Berrigan, Philip, 133, 553n
- BLA (Buró Latinoamericano—Latin American Bureau, Fourth International), 146, 557n
- Blackburn, Robin, 132-34, 138-39, 553n
- Black Panther*, 128, 165, 167

- Black Panther Party (U.S.), 128, 134, 135-36, 552n, 553n, 554n
- Blanco, Hugo, 25, 235, 349, 535n; on guerrilla warfare in Peru, 217-18, 350-51; on Moreno's role in Peru, 218, 350; and peasant movement in Peru, 19, 94, 217-19, 340, 346-47, 566n; on party building, 347, 348
- Bolivia, 188, 189, 233, 439, 563n; balance sheet on guerrilla warfare in, 223, 226-51; defeat of Guevara's guerrilla movement in, 39, 66-69, 80-81; discussion on, at 1974 world congress of Fourth International, 446-47; guerrilla warfare by Trotskyists in, 21, 159, 226-27; labor movement in, 229, 230-31, 543n; mass upsurge in, 227-31, 232, 233, 238, 239, 245; Political Command, 232, 237, 239; Popular Assembly, 214, 232, 239, 245, 565n; reformism and ultraleftism in, 240. *See also* Communist Party (Bolivia); ELN; Falange; FRA; MIR (Bolivia); MNR; POR (González); POR (Lora); PRIN
- "Bolivia—Once Again on the Facts" (Camejo), 360
- Bolsheviks: and armed struggle, 11; and elections, 107-9, 548n; and expropriations, 111, 113; and guerrilla warfare, 107, 110; and morality, 111-12; strategy of, 187, 190-92; and terrorism, 189
- Bolshevik Tendency, 546n
- Boycott of Russian Duma elections, 548n; Lenin on, 107-9, 112
- Bravo, Douglas, 89, 544n
- Brazil, 59, 117-18, 213, 541n. *See also* ALN; POC; VPR
- Breitman, George, 388, 586n
- Bressano, Hugo. *See* Moreno, Nahuel
- Brest-Litovsk treaty, 519, 594n
- Britain, guerrilla warfare and, 137-42. *See also* IMG
- "Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe, The," 413-20, 428, 429, 443
- Bukharin, Nikolai, 14
- Bulygin Duma (Russia), 108, 548n
- Burgos trial (Spain), 327, 577-78n
- Bustos, Ciro, 121-22, 180, 551n
- Camejo, Peter, 25, 208, 355-57, 360, 374, 510, 581n
- Canada, 94, 142-45, 376-81, 556n, 584-85n
- Cannon, James P., 13, 14, 198, 372, 373-74, 564n
- Carrero Blanco, Luis, 440, 591-92n
- Castro, Fidel, 41, 303, 304-6, 536n, 537n; and armed struggle, 41, 66, 155, 356, 368
- Castroism, and Fourth International, 439-40
- Catalán Avilés, Elmo, 229, 568n
- Catholic Church: and Franco, 112; Latin American radicals and, 482
- Ceylon, 373, 582n
- CGT (Confederación General del Trabajo—General Confederation of Labor, Argentina), 262-70, 271, 571n; split in, 259, 557n, 572n
- Chandra, Kailas (Sitiram Kolpe), 448, 457-58, 592-93n
- "Character of the New Cuban Government, The" (Hansen), 16-17
- Chiang Kai-shek, 353, 355, 580n, 581n
- Chile, 214, 219, 481, 490n, 505, 566-67n; MIR in, 276, 289, 482, 573n
- China, 170-71, 177-78, 276; debate in Fourth International on, 58-59, 70-74, 512; 1925-27 revolution in, 186, 353-55, 562n, 580-81n; 1949 revolution in, 410-11
- Christian Democratic Party (Argentina), 290-91, 574n
- Chueque, Marcos, 270
- Clarke, George, 13
- Cleaver, Eldridge, 135, 553n
- COB (Central Obrera Boliviana—Bolivian Workers Federation), 229, 230-31, 543n
- Combate*, 581n
- Combatiente*, *El*, 25, 285, 290
- Communist International, 12, 53, 409, 539n
- Communist Party (Argentina), 149, 263, 293
- Communist Party (Bolivia), 67, 233, 240, 251, 252
- Communist Party (Chile), 481
- Communist Party (China), 276, 580-81n
- Communist Party (Cuba): before 1961 (PSP), 41, 537n; after 1961, 492, 545n
- Communist Party (France), 324, 327, 427, 537n
- Communist Party (Germany), 563n
- Communist Party (Indonesia), 176-77, 560n

- Communist Party (Venezuela), 22, 41, 63, 155, 219, 304, 370, 493
- "Comrade Germain's Errors on the National Question" (Horowitz), 389
- "Concerning Demonstrations" (Lenin), 309
- Contre le Courant Tendency (France), 448
- Contreras, Ramón, 261
- "Contribution to the Discussion on Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America, A" (Hansen), 79-99; Maitan on, 102-3, 129, 145, 179
- Coral, Juan Carlos, 293, 574-75n
- Cordobazo, 254, 260-62
- Creus, Eduardo, 94, 545-46n
- Cristianismo y Revolución*, 149, 283, 284
- "Criticism of the United Secretariat Majority Draft Resolution on 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe'—an Initial Contribution to the Discussion" (Waters), 414
- Cuarta Internacional*, 330
- Cuba, 21-22, 34, 41. *See also* Communist Party (Cuba); Cuban leadership; Cuban revolution; July 26 Movement
- "Cuba, Military Reformism, and Armed Struggle in Latin America" (Maitan), 83, 86, 91, 182
- Cuban leadership, 16-17, 42, 216; and guerrilla strategy, 42-43, 88-92, 219-20, 369-72
- Cuban revolution, 15, 40-43, 92-94, 305, 411, 490-92; and guerrilla warfare, 170-71, 355-58; and Latin America, 9-10, 63-64, 341-42, 348-49, 471, 481, 487; and Stalinism, 41-43, 63, 89, 157
- Cultural Revolution (China), 58-59, 70-74, 512
- Czechoslovakia, 41, 59, 537n
- Debray, Régis, 120, 121, 126, 127, 216, 217, 550-51n
- Democracy, bourgeois, 194; in Latin America, 212
- Democratic centralism: in Fourth International, 319-21, 518-19; in LSA/LSO, 379
- Democratic demands, 75, 221-22
- Democratic dictatorship of proletariat and peasantry, 191, 563-64n
- Deutscher, Isaac, 408, 587n
- Dialectical materialism, 401, 587n
- Dohrn, Bernardine, 134-35, 553-54n
- Domingo letter, 150-52, 365-67, 558n
- Dominican Republic, 33, 34, 189, 535n
- Dowbor, Ladislav, 118-20, 157, 180
- Dowson, Ross, 142, 377, 378, 379, 380, 556n
- "Draft Resolution on Latin America," 22; assessment of, 31-55. *See also* "Resolution on Latin America"
- Drapeau, Jean, 143
- Duma (Russia), 107-9, 112, 548n, 549n
- Dylan, Bob, 124
- Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution* (Hansen), 16
- East Village Other*, 135
- Eastern Europe, 13, 410
- Elections: in Argentina, 286, 292, 293, 294, 587n; in Britain, 138-42; in France, 518, 590n, 594n; to Russian Dumas, 107-9, 112, 548n, 549n; in Uruguay, 289
- ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional—National Liberation Army, Bolivia), 39, 80, 146-48, 226, 230
- Engels, Frederick, 104
- Enríquez, Miguel, 573n
- Entryism sui generis, 62, 137-38, 168, 405, 411-12, 554-55n; historic estimate of, as tactic, 77, 416-17, 516, 541n
- ERP (Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo—Revolutionary Army of the People, Argentina), 23, 149-50, 263, 285; actions of, 264, 272, 299-300, 302-3
- Escalante, Aníbal, 93, 545n
- Estrategia*, 147
- Estrella Roja*, 285, 308
- Europe: discussion on, at 1974 world congress of Fourth International, 446-47; 1969 resolution on, 512. *See also* "Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe, The"; Entryism sui generis; French turn
- European Secretariat (Fourth International), 12
- Expreso*, 343
- Expropriations, in 1905 Russian revolution, 110-13
- Fair Play for Cuba Committee, 94, 545n
- Falange (Bolivia), 233, 569n
- FALN (Venezuela). *See* FLN/FALN
- FAR (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias)

- rias—Revolutionary Armed Forces, Argentina), 263, 264
- Fascism, 114, 422-23; exemplary actions and struggle against, 187, 188; guerrilla warfare and struggle against, 316
- Fifty Years of World Revolution 1917-1967* (Mandel, ed.), 152, 226
- Filler, Silvia, 270
- FIR Frente de la Izquierda Revolucionaria—Front of the Revolutionary Left, Peru), 348, 545n
- First International, 53, 409, 538n
- FLN/FALN (Frente de Liberación Nacional / Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional—National Liberation Front/Armed Forces of National Liberation, Venezuela), 303, 544n, 575n
- FLQ (Front de Libération du Québec—Québec Liberation Front, Canada), 142, 143, 556n
- Foco theory, 20, 81, 543n
- Fourth International. *See also* Reunification Congress; Seventh World Congress; 1965 world congress; 1969 world congress; 1974 world congress; United Secretariat; names of parties
- and Cuba, 91, 573n
 - debate on armed struggle: *see* “Armed Struggle in Latin America”
 - debate on Cultural Revolution, 70-74, 77
 - debate on guerrilla warfare, 9-12, 24-30, 205-7, 208-25, 333-35, 399-400, 428, 443-45
 - and democratic centralism, 78, 319-21, 518-19
 - discussion on youth radicalization, 74-76, 511-12
 - factionalism in, 519-20, 532-33
 - guerrilla warfare turn of (1969), 76-77, 129; and adaptation to Castroism, 214-16, 224, 509; and Bolivia, 52-54, 226, 236, 239, 240, 247-49; extends beyond Latin America, 98, 132-34, 137-42, 222-23, 316-17, 318, 321-32; and Marxist method, 509-10; and 1974 world congress, 449, 450-51; origins of, 159-60; and political and organizational deterioration, 192-93, 200-202, 312-32, 406, 433, 516-22
 - history of, 12-16, 17, 28-30, 58, 146, 158-59, 409-13, 452, 585n
 - international campaigns of, 54-55, 95, 420-21
 - leadership of, 170, 430-33
 - and OLAS, 45-47
 - recruitment of youth to, 11, 70, 76, 129, 160, 322, 440, 505, 510-11
 - ultraleftism and, 98, 372-73
 - views of Mao Tse-tung in, 520
 - and youth radicalization, 48-49, 62, 98, 211
- FRA (Frente Revolucionario Antiimperialista—Anti-imperialist Revolutionary Front, Bolivia), 250-53, 570n
- France: and guerrilla warfare, 323-31; 1936 upsurge, 324, 577n; June 21, 1973, antifascist action, 420-24, 518, 590n; May-June 1968 events, 41, 48, 49, 59, 160, 536-37n; 1973 elections, 518, 590n, 594n. *See also* French turn; LC
- Franco, Francisco, 112
- Frank, Pierre, 13, 22, 57, 73, 512, 539n, 589n; on democratic centralism, 319-21; and extension of guerrilla warfare strategy beyond Latin America, 318, 321-22
- French turn, 384, 585n; in U.S., 14
- Freney, Denis, 413
- Frías, Ismael, 343, 345, 579-80n
- Fronzizi, Arturo, 288, 574n
- FUR (Frente de Unidade Revolucionária—Front for Revolutionary Unity, Portugal), 517, 593-94n
- Gadea, Ricardo, 156
- GAN (Gran Acuerdo Nacional—Great National Plan, Argentina), 257, 571n
- Gary, Joseph E., 166
- Gauche, La*, 301, 307-9, 315-16, 317-18
- GCR (Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari—Revolutionary Communist Groups, Italy), 301, 538n
- Geneva conference, 177, 561n
- Germain, Ernest. *See* Mandel, Ernest
- Germany: 1918-19 revolution, 185, 561n, 563n; 1921 March Action, 186, 187, 562n; 1933 defeat, 167
- GMR (Groupe Marxiste Révolutionnaire—Revolutionary Marxist Group, Canada), 584-85n
- Goldman, Albert, 583n
- González Moscoso, Hugo, 147, 215, 226, 240, 248, 508, 515, 557n
- Gorriarán, Enrique Haroldo, 276, 277, 289, 573n
- Gramont, Sanche de, 117-18

- Granma*, 53, 539n
- Guerrilla warfare, 10. *See also* Armed struggle; names of guerrilla groups
- in Argentina, 263, 272
 - Blanco on, 217-18, 350-51
 - in Bolivia, 121, 159, 226-27
 - in Brazil, 117-18
 - and Cuban revolution, 40, 491
 - defeats before 1969 turn of Fourth International, 87-88, 157, 214
 - Engels on, 104
 - and exemplary actions, 187, 188
 - Fourth International turn toward, 23, 122; compared to Túpac Amaru, 352; extends beyond Latin America, 24, 36, 50, 124-28, 331-32; IMT self-criticism on, 497-99; Maitan on, 97, 456-57; 1969 Latin America resolution on, 476-77, 478-81
 - Lenin on, 105-6, 107, 112
 - in Peru, 69
 - in Québec, 142-43
 - reasons for persistence of, 170-71
 - and Socialist Workers Party, 115-16
 - strategy of, 38-39, 45, 70, 355-58, 401, 508; vs. party building, 33-36, 60-61, 81, 118-20, 196-200, 335-39, 371; political errors of, 21, 55, 62, 313
 - and struggle against fascism, 173-76, 316
 - tactic of, 11, 55, 84, 123, 216; disadvantages of, 19-20, 298, 310-11
 - Trotsky on, 109-13, 246
 - in United States, 125, 132-35
 - in Uruguay, 120
 - and workers' self-defense, 171-78
 - in Yugoslavia, 175
- "Guerrilla Warfare" (Lenin), 104, 183
- Guevara, Che, 10, 22, 39, 147, 536n; Bustos on, 121-22; defeat of, in Bolivia, 39, 66-69; and guerrilla strategy, 296-97, 299, 356-57; and internationalism, 65; martyrdom of, and spread of guerrillism among youth, 159
- Halstead, Fred, 360
- Hansen, Joseph, 9, 10, 13-27, 30, 208, 289; 1961 trip to Latin America, 18, 145-46, 556n
- Hansen, Reba, 18, 19, 556n
- Harris, Connie, 142, 555n
- Haston, Jock, 13, 413, 589n
- Haymarket martyrs, 166-67, 559n
- Healy, Gerry, 13, 411, 546-47n
- Hic, Marcel, 12
- Hinkle, Warren, 125, 126, 127
- Hispanic America Report*, 343
- History of the Russian Revolution, The* (Trotsky), 187, 437
- Ho Chi Minh, 177, 560-61n
- Holleben, Ehrenfried von, 118, 550n
- Hoover, J. Edgar, 133
- Horowitz, Gus, 389
- Hu Han-min, 353-54, 581n
- Hungarian revolution (1956), 413, 589n
- IEC Majority Tendency, 25, 459-61. *See also* IMT
- IMG (International Marxist Group, Britain), 139-42, 193, 456, 555n
- IMT (International Majority Tendency), 25, 26-27, 28, 402, 579n; and armed struggle, 437-41, 454-58; and Barzman letter, 444; and Bolivia, 226, 234, 235; on Cuban leadership, 493-94; on Cuban revolution, 490-92; disagreements within, 486; and guerrilla warfare turn, 224-25, 312; and new mass vanguard, 446; and OLAS, 493; positions at 1974 world congress, 446-47; and PRT (*Combatiente*), 393-95, 407-8; self-criticism of, 27-28, 485-506
- "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" (Mandel), 333-433 *passim*
- "In Defense of the Leninist Strategy of Party Building" (Hansen), 24, 100-207
- Independent Socialist Party of Germany, 191, 563n
- India, 60, 592-93n
- Indochina, 173, 176. *See also* Vietnam
- Indonesia, 59, 172, 176-77, 438, 541n, 560n
- "Insufficient Document, An" (Maitan), 50, 79-80, 96-97, 130-31, 154, 199
- Intercontinental Press*, 18, 75, 82, 83, 286, 304
- International Committee (1953-63 faction of Fourth International), 14, 158-59, 340, 345
- International Committee (Healyites), 240
- International Executive Committee (Fourth International), 13, 24-25, 541n
- International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, 395, 445
- International Left Opposition, 384, 585n
- International Secretariat (Fourth International), 13, 14, 345

- International Socialist Review*, 15, 355
 Interunion grouping (Argentina), 264, 268, 269
 IRA (Irish Republican Army), 317, 576n
 Iribarren Borges, Julio, 303, 575n
 Italy, 131-32
- Jackson State (Mississippi) murders, 135, 554n
 JAPs (Juntas de Abastecimiento y Control de Precios—Committees to Control Food Supplies and Prices, Chile), 502-3
 JCR (Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire—Revolutionary Communist Youth, France), 537n
 Jebrac, 323, 512, 577n
 Jerónimo, 261
 Johnson, Lyndon B., 68
 Jones, Alan, 26, 530, 594n
 Jordan, Pat, 139-40, 555n
 Juan Carlos, 595n
 "July Days" (Russia, 1917), 187, 562-63n
 July 26 Movement, 40, 492, 536n
- Kamenev, Lev, 339, 563n
 Kautsky, Karl, 103, 547n
 Kent State (Ohio) murders, 135, 554n
 "Key Documents Discussed by the IMG Membership in Preparation for Their March 1970 Conference," 141-42
 Knoeller, Martine (Gisela Mandel), 24, 547n
 Koeller, Jenny, 229, 568n
 Kolpe, Sitiram. *See* Chandra, Kailas
 Kompass Tendency, 448, 592n
 Korea, 173
 Kornilov, Lavr, 249, 570n
 Krassin, Leonid, 109, 548n
 Krivine, Alain, 75, 319-21, 420, 421-22, 542n, 590n
 Kuomintang (KMT), 580-81n
 Kvostism, 381, 585n
- Labor Action* (California Socialist Party), 14
Labor Challenge, 142, 376, 584n
 Labour Party (Britain), 138-42
 "Labour Party in Perspective—In Reply to Robin Blackburn, The" (Harris), 142
 Lambert, Pierre, 373, 411, 572n, 582-83n
 Lambertists: in Argentina (Política Obrera), 269, 292, 571-72n; opposition to minority violence, 327
Land or Death: The Peasant Struggle in Perú (Blanco), 218, 346, 347
 Lanusse, Alejandro, 257, 308, 571n
 Latin America: bourgeoisie in, 234, 474; class struggle in, 213, 465-70; CPs in, 41; economy of, 464-65; 1969 world congress discussion on, 60-70; three strategies for, 335. *See also* "Resolution on Latin America"
- LC (Ligue Communiste—Communist League, France), 75, 542n; guerrillaist tendency in, 323-31, 424-25, 510; and June 21, 1973, action, 420-24, 518, 590n; and minority violence, 421-28; at 1969 world congress, 513-14; and PRT (*Combatiente*), 395
 LCR (Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire—Revolutionary Communist League, France), 590n
 Leary, Timothy, 134, 136, 553n
 Lechín, Juan, 230, 233, 252, 568-69n
 Left Opposition (USSR), 12
 Lenin, Vladimir I.: and April Theses, 191, 564n; on armed struggle, 309; on boycott of Russian Duma elections, 107-9, 112; and democratic dictatorship of proletariat and peasantry, 429-30, 563-64n; on expropriations, 111-12, 113; and guerrilla warfare in 1905 revolution, 105-6, 107, 112, 183, 224; on Marxist method, 104-5, 106; on tail-endism, 392
 Leninism. *See* Revolutionary party, strategy of
 Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, 25, 28, 434, 437, 444, 591n; and 1974 world congress, 447-48, 461-63
 Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency, 25, 332, 334-35, 425-26, 444, 578n
 Leon, Abram, 12
 Leoni, Raúl, 304, 575-76n
 Lesoil, Leon, 12
 "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising" (Lenin), 104
Letters from Prison (Cannon), 372, 373-74
 Livingston, Roberto Marcelo, 121, 256, 551n
Libération, 377, 584n
 Liu Shao-ch'i, 72, 542n
 Lobatón, Guillermo, 69, 156, 541n
 London Congress (Russian Social Democratic Labor Party), 111-12, 113, 549n

Longue Marche de la Révolution, La (Mandel), 529

Lora, Guillermo, 569n

Lorenzo, Aníbal, 25, 208, 447

LRT (Ligue Révolutionnaire des Travailleurs—Revolutionary Workers League, Belgium), 301

LSA/LSO (League for Socialist Action / Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière, Canada), 376, 377-81, 556n, 584n

LSSP (Lanka Sama Samaja Party—Ceylon Equal Society Party), 582n

McCarthyism, 58

McGovern, George, 386, 586n

Maitan, Livio, 13, 19, 22, 24, 57, 96-98, 538n; on Argentina, 102, 286-87, 301, 306; on armed struggle, 91, 456-57; on Bolivia, 50-51, 103, 227, 234; on Carrero Blanco assassination, 456; on China debate, 71, 73; on classical norm of proletarian revolution, 203; on Cuban leadership, 89-90; on Debray, 118, 551n; on guerrilla warfare, 84, 86-87, 97, 103, 115, 129-32, 227; on IMT self-criticism, 485n; on Marxist method, 116, 117; on Moreno, 145, 146, 366; on 1969 turn, 196-97, 318, 508; on perspectives in Europe, 446; on Peru, 217, 218; on reformist regimes in Latin America, 83-84, 236; on revolution without working class, 130-31, 173. *See also* Domingo letter

Manco II (Manco Inca Yupanqui), 218, 566n

Mandel, Ernest (Ernest Germain), 13, 22, 24, 57, 539-40n; on Argentina, 301, 307, 359-60; on armed struggle resolution, 457; on Blanco's movement, 346-47, 352; on Canada, 376, 377-78, 380, 381; on China, 72-73, 352-53; on Cuba, 355-58; on debate in Fourth International, 333, 398-99; on Europe, 417-20; on FRA, 359; and guerrillaism, 395-96; and initiatives in action, 446; on leadership of Fourth International, 430-31; method of, 336-39, 358, 374-75, 396-97; on Moreno, 367; on national question, 377, 388-89; and 1969 turn, 360-63, 515, 516; on OLAS, 368; on SWP, 340, 381-83, 388-90; on ultraleftism and opportunism, 372-73. *See also* Armed struggle, Germain and Knoeller on

Mandel, Gisela (Martine Knoeller), 24, 547n

Manuit Camero, Elías, 303-4, 575n

Maoism, 71, 176-77, 411

Mao Tse-tung, 59, 72, 126, 520

Marcellin, Raymond, 423-24, 590-91n

Marighella, Carlos, 118, 127, 550n

Marlenites, 384, 585n

Martorell, José, 348, 580n

Marxist theory, 116-17, 192, 403, 404, 407

"Meaning of the IMT Self-Criticism on Latin America, The" (Barnes), 507-33

Mensheviks, 110, 111, 113

Mestre, Michele, 413, 589n

Mexico, 35, 48, 49, 256, 535n

Mezhrayonka Tendency, 448-49, 592n

Militant, 15, 16, 342-43, 344, 360

Mill, Michel, 380, 584n

Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla (Marighella), 127

Minority violence, 10, 25, 436, 437, 450; in France, 327-28, 421-28

MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria—Movement of the Revolutionary Left, Bolivia), 248, 570n

MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria—Movement of the Revolutionary Left, Chile), 276, 289, 482, 573n

MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria—Movement of the Revolutionary Left, Peru), 541n

Miranda, Rogelio, 229, 230, 232, 568n

MNR (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario—Revolutionary Nationalist Movement, Bolivia), 230, 233, 482, 563n, 568n

MO (Milicia Obrera—Workers Militia, Argentina), 269

Molotov, Vyacheslav, 339, 563n

Monde, Le, 230

Montoneros (Argentina), 263, 272, 571n

Morality, Bolshevik, 111-12

Moreno, Nahuel (Hugo Bressano, Capa), 18, 25, 145, 208, 490n, 546n; attacks on, 149, 150, 151, 365-67; on China, 72, 152; on guerrilla warfare, 146-48, 367; and OLAS, 371; and Peru, 94, 145, 146, 218, 341, 344, 350

Morrow, Felix, 583-84n

Moscow trials, 14

MSP (Movimiento Social Progresista—Social Progressive Movement, Peru), 342, 579n

National question: in Canada, 377-78,

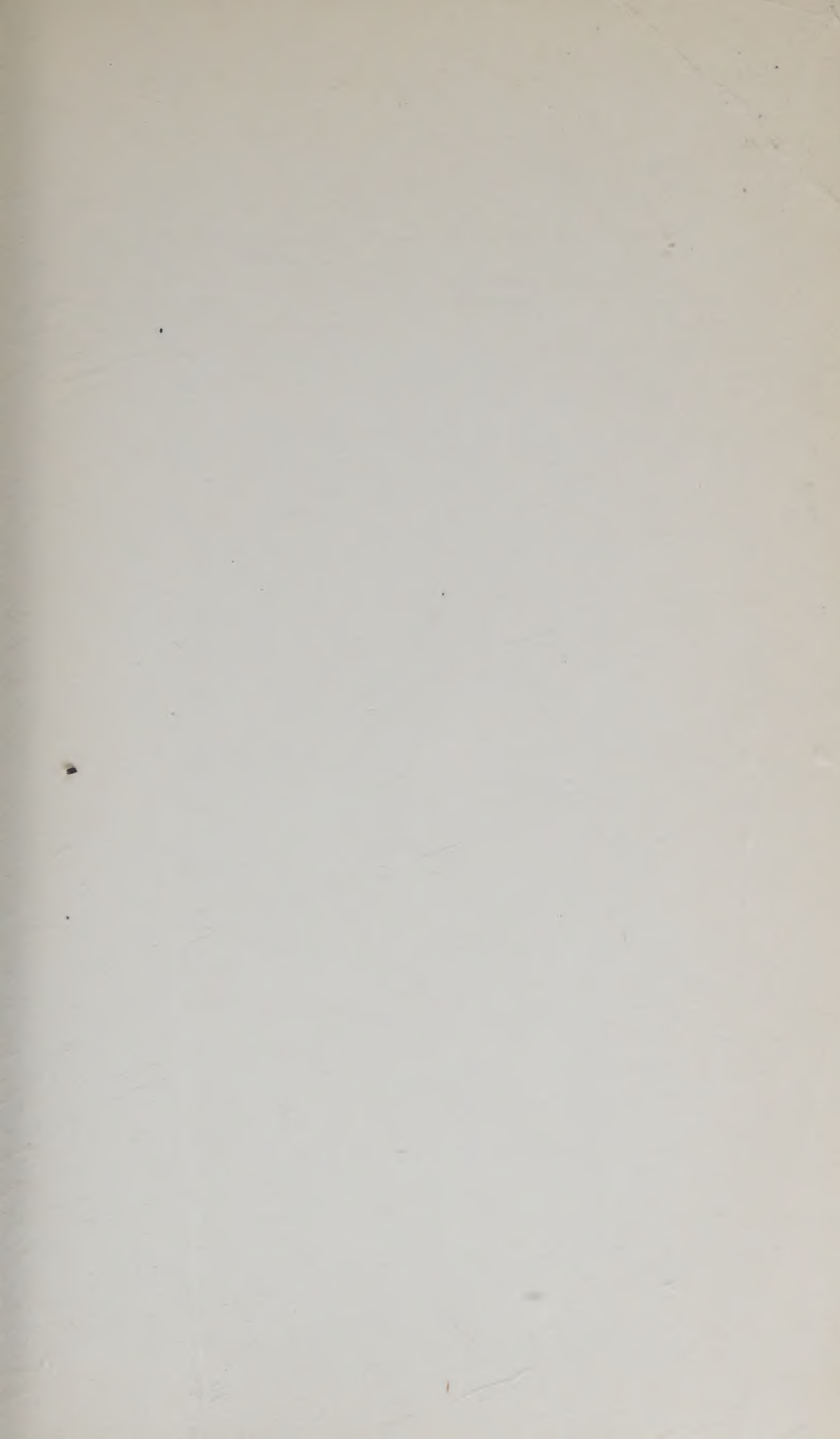
- 380, 381; in Latin America, 222, 481; in U.S., 388
- NDP (New Democratic Party, Canada), 376, 584n
- New mass vanguard, 439, 446, 450, 528
- "New Rise of World Revolution, The," 25, 59, 203-4
- Newton, Huey, 135, 552n
- New York Times*, 231
- New York Times Magazine*, 117-18
- 1965 world congress (Fourth International), 57
- 1969 world congress (Fourth International), 56-78, 352, 507-11, 512, 513-15; and Argentine section, 148, 306, 393; IMT on, 487-502. *See also* Guerrilla warfare, Fourth International turn to; Fourth International, turn to guerrilla warfare
- 1974 world congress (Fourth International), 25, 434, 442-63, 592n
- 19th World Congress. *See* 1969 world congress
- Nixon, Richard, 133
- Nogrette, Robert, 301, 575n
- Novack, George, 13, 401, 587n
- Nuclear war, 173
- Obrero y Campesino*, 343
- OCRFI (Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International), 572n
- OLAS (Organization of Latin American Solidarity) conference (1967), 21-22, 63, 64, 89, 155, 537n, 547n; debate on guerrilla warfare vs. peaceful road, 368-69; and Fourth International 1969 turn, 46, 159, 508; and IMT, 493; and Latin America resolution, 481, 483; Mandel on, 368; Moreno on, 146-48; SWP and, 345-46, 369-71
- Old Mole (Canada), 381, 584n
- Olminsky, Mikhail Stepanovich, 112, 549n
- "Once Again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America—Defense of an Orientation and a Method" (Maitan), reply to, 102-52
- "On Comrade Germain's Half-Truths: or How the ERP Flag Got on the Coffin" (Halstead), 360
- Onganía, Juan Carlos, 255, 256, 570n
- Ongaro, Raimundo, 259, 557n, 571n
- Only Road to Workers' Power and Socialism. The* (PRT [*Combatiente*]), 275, 393, 395, 514-15
- Opportunism, 372-73
- Ordre Nouveau (France), 421
- Ovando Candia, Alfredo, 83, 229, 230, 543n
- Pablo, Michel, 57, 367, 404-5, 539n, 589n; and Fourth International, 13, 17, 411, 431
- Pakistan, 60, 74
- Paris Commune, 186, 562n
- Parsons, Albert, 166-67, 559n
- Paz Estenssoro, Victor, 227, 563n, 567n
- PCI (Parti Communiste Internationaliste—Internationalist Communist Party, France), 537n
- PCR (Partido Comunista Revolucionario—Revolutionary Communist Party, Argentina), 262, 266, 269, 571n
- Peasantry: and guerrilla warfare, 326; in Latin America, 32, 467, 474; in Peru, 19, 217-219, 347; transitional method and, 221-22
- P'eng Shu-tse, 72, 73, 215-16, 221, 222, 542n
- Peredo, Osvaldo "Chato," 230, 231, 568n
- Peredo, Guido "Inti," 80, 81, 147, 159, 542-43n
- Pereyra, Daniel, 94, 545n; and PRT (*Combatiente*), 344, 515-16; and Túpac Amaru guerrillas, 341-44, 348, 349, 350
- Permanent revolution, 191, 564n; and Latin America resolution, 222
- Perón, Juan Domingo, 255, 291-92, 308, 557n, 571n, 574n
- Peronism, mass working-class illusions in, 255, 291-93
- Peronist movement (Argentina), 149, 257, 258, 263
- Peru, 83, 94, 214, 482, 541n, 579n; Argentine Trotskyists in, 94, 545-46n; Blanco and peasant struggle in, 19, 94, 217-19, 340-41, 347; guerrilla warfare in, 69, 341-45, 348-50
- Peru 1965: Notes on a Guerrilla Experience* (Béjar), 156
- Pilsudski, Joseph, 110, 548n
- PO (Política Obrera—Workers Politics, Argentina), 269, 292, 571-72n
- POC (Partido Operário Comunista—Communist Workers Party, Brazil), 482
- Political revolution, 58, 540n

- "Political Strike and the Street Fighting in Moscow, The" (Lenin), 104
- Pompidou, Georges, 423, 427, 590n
- Popular Front, 168, 293, 559n
- POR (Partido Obrero Revolucionario—Revolutionary Workers Party, Peru), 545n
- POR (González) (Partido Obrero Revolucionario—Revolutionary Workers Party, Bolivia), 563n, 567-68n; on army, 247; on Bolivian defeat, 237; and FRA, 250-53; IMT on, 505; and 1969 Fourth International turn, 236, 239, 240, 247-49; on objective situation, 228-29; on Political Command, 242; and Popular Assembly, 243, 244; slogans of, 241-42; strategy of, 23, 85, 86; and struggle against Banzer coup, 249
- POR (Lora), 240, 251, 252, 569n
- Portugal, 517, 593-94n
- Posadas, Juan (Homero Cristali), 17, 146, 151, 367, 556-57n
- Posadistas, in Argentina, 263
- Poulipoulis, Pantelis, 12
- Prada, Francisco, 155, 558n
- PRIN (Partido Revolucionario de la Izquierda Nacionalista—Revolutionary Party of the Nationalist Left, Bolivia), 482, 569n
- Provisionals (IRA, Ireland), 317, 576n
- PRT (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores—Revolutionary Workers Party, Argentina), split of, 70, 148-49, 543n. *See also* PRT (*Combatiente*); PRT (*La Verdad*)
- PRT (*Combatiente*) (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores—Revolutionary Workers Party, Argentina), 23, 25, 82, 193, 263, 310, 546n; and armed struggle, 297-98; and army, 299-300; and Bolivia, 147; and Castroism, 216, 275, 277; and Chilean MIR, 276, 289; and elections, 292-93; on exemplary actions, 283-84; Fifth Congress of, 150, 274, 278, 284-85; and Fourth International, 274-75, 276, 314-15, 320-21, 394-95, 443, 592n; and IMT, 407-8; IMT self-criticism on, 499-501, 586n; and LC, 395; and legality, 295; and mass actions, 279-80, 282; and 1969 world congress, 306, 501n, 508, 515; on objective situation in Argentina, 307; politics of, 392-93; compared with PRT (*La Verdad*), 274-78, 280, 282, 407-9; repression of, 543n; splits in, 148-49, 310, 576n; and terrorism, 300-303; and Uruguay, 276, 289. *See also* Domingo letter; ERP
- PRT (*La Verdad*) (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores—Revolutionary Workers Party, Argentina), 25, 310, 408, 543n; and elections, 286, 292, 293, 294, 587n; and fusion with PSA (Coral), 270, 293-94; and Peronism, 292; and Popular Frontism, 288, 292; role in class struggle, 278, 282-83, 285-86; politics of, 273, 277-80, 407-9; and SWP, 151, 152; and unions, 263, 264-66, 269, 281
- PRT (Uruguay) (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores—Revolutionary Workers Party), 289, 574n
- PSA (Partido Socialista Argentino—Socialist Party of Argentina), 270-72, 293-94, 572n
- PSP (Partido Socialista del Perú—Socialist Party of Peru), 342, 579n
- PSP (Partido Socialista Popular—Popular Socialist Party, Cuba), 41, 537n
- PSR (Partido Socialista Revolucionario—Revolutionary Socialist Party, Chile), 505
- PST (Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores—Socialist Workers Party, Argentina), 25, 294, 462, 587n. *See also* PRT (*La Verdad*); PSA
- Puente Uceda, Luis de la, 19, 69, 156, 541n
- Punto Final*, 81, 121, 276, 277, 289
- Quatrième Internationale*, 516, 561n
- Québec, guerrilla warfare in, 142-43, 556n
- RCT (Revolutionary Communist Tendency, Canada), 380
- Red Circle (Canada), 381, 584n
- Red Mole*, 136-43, 149, 554n
- Red Weekly*, 440, 456
- Reformism, in Bolivia, 240, 251
- "Resolution on Armed Struggle in Latin America." *See* "Armed Struggle in Latin America"
- "Resolution on Latin America" (1969 world congress of Fourth International): and adaptation to ultraleftism, 98; on Cuba, 471n; on defeats of

- guerrilla warfare, 156; guerrilla strategy of, 473-81; on national bourgeoisie, 234; on nationalist movements, 481; on objective situation, 31-33, 79; on OLAS, 481, 483; political perspectives of, 470-73; on repression, 83, 477-78; on revolutionary party, 480-81; text of, 464-84
- Reunification Congress (Fourth International), 18, 57, 58, 115-16, 158
- Revolutionary party, 40-41, 43-44, 92, 176; and debate between Cubans and Stalinists, 42; strategy of building, 10-11, 163, 180-81; strategy counterposed to guerrilla warfare strategy, 33-36, 60-61, 81, 118-20, 196-200, 335-39, 371
- Revolutionary program, vs. tactics, 40, 41-42. *See also* Transitional Program
- RMG (Revolutionary Marxist Group, Canada), 584-85n
- Roca, Blas, 41, 537n
- Rocazo, 271-72
- Rood, 301, 317
- Rosario, 260
- Rouge*, 149, 243, 248, 330, 558n
- Rousset, Pierre, 420, 590n
- Rucci, José, 268, 572n
- Russia: 1905 revolution in, 107-9, 185, 186, 246, 548n, 549n; 1917 revolution in, 187, 561n, 562-63n
- Russian Social Democratic Labor Party: London Congress, 111-12, 113, 459n; Stockholm Congress, 111, 549n
- Rykov, Alexei, 14
- RYM (Revolutionary Youth Movement, U.S.), 403, 587n. *See also* Weatherman
- Sallustro, Oberdan, 300, 301, 302-3
- Samoilov, Fyodor Nikitich, 111, 548-49n
- Sánchez, Juan Carlos, 300, 572n
- Sandino, Augusto César, 121, 552
- Santo Domingo invasion (1965), 33, 34, 189, 535n
- Santucho Juárez, Mario Roberto, 276, 277, 289, 572-73n
- Scanlan's*, 125, 165, 167
- SDS (Students for a Democratic Society, U.S.), 387, 402, 552n, 587n
- Seale, Bobby, 552n
- Second International, 53, 409, 538-39n
- Secret faction, IMT as, 444
- "Self-Criticism on Latin America" (IMT): Barnes on, 521-29; text of, 485-506
- Self-criticism, and Stalinism, 530-31
- Seventh World Congress (Fourth International), 57
- Shachtman, Max, 354, 540n, 583-84n
- Shachtmanites, 374, 583-84n
- Siles Salinas, Adolfo, 229
- Siles Suazo, Hernán, 230, 569n
- SITRAC (Sindicato de los Trabajadores de Concord—Concord Workers Union, Argentina), 262, 265-70
- SITRAM (Sindicato de los Trabajadores de Materfer—Materfer Workers Union, Argentina), 262, 265-70
- SLATO (Secretariado Latinoamericano del Trotskismo Ortodoxo—Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyism), 348, 545n
- SMATA (Sindicato de Mecánicos y Afines del Transporte Automotor del Automóvil—Union of Automotive Machinists and Allied Trades), 259
- Socialist Party (France), 427
- Solzhenitsyn, Alexander, 73
- Souvarine, Boris, 113, 550n
- Spain, 186, 530, 561n; Burgos trial, 327, 577-78n; Carrero Blanco assassination, 440-41, 591-92n
- Spark theory, 20
- Sprovieri, Jorge, 271
- Stalin, Joseph (Koba), 113, 339, 355, 550n, 563n
- Stalin: An Appraisal of the Man and His Influence* (Trotsky), 109-13, 549n
- Stalinism, 12, 157, 170, 177-78, 219-20, 410, 512; and Cuban revolution, 41, 89, 92-93; and debate with Cubans on strategy in Latin America, 42-43, 369-72
- Stein, Morris, 13
- Stockholm Congress (Russian Social Democratic Labor Party), 111, 549n
- "Strategic Orientation of the Revolutionists in Latin America, The" (German and Knoeller), 100; reply to, 153-207
- Students: in Argentina, 260, 262, 270-71; in Bolivia, 229, 230, 231; in Latin America, 469-70; in Mexico, 35, 48, 49, 256, 535n; in Pakistan, 60, 74. *See also* France, May-June 1968 events in
- Suárez González, Adolfo, 595n
- Sukarno, 176
- Swabeck, Arne, 411, 413, 588n
- SWP (Socialist Workers Party, U.S.), 26, 58, 391-92, 540n, 583-84n; and Cultural

- Revolution, 512; and Domingo letter, 365-67; factionalism against, 515; and Fourth International, 13, 57-58, 362-63, 391, 432, 442; and guerrilla warfare, 115-16, 128, 345-46; IMT criticisms of, 161-62, 381-83, 388-90; and PRT (*La Verdad*), 151, 152; and Vietnam War, 385-88
- Sylvester, Stanley, 300, 302
- Tenth World Congress. *See* 1974 world congress
- Terán, Reque, 228, 568n
- Terrorism, 451; and PRT (*Combatiente*), 300-303; in Russia, 109-10, 337. *See also* Assassinations; Minority violence
- Theory. *See* Marxist theory
- Third International, 12, 53, 409, 539n
- Third International After Lenin, The* (Trotsky), 353-54
- Third Period, 168, 559n
- Tiflis (Russia) expropriation, 113, 549-50n
- Tito, Josip Broz, 175, 588n
- Torres, Juan José, 229, 231-32, 233, 235-36, 249, 250, 568n
- Torres, Camilo, 149, 482, 557-58n
- Torres, Ilpidio, 261
- Tosco, Agustín, 261
- Transitional demands, 196, 538n
- Transitional Program: and arming of the masses, 244-45, 296, 435-36, 439; and bourgeois democracy, 194; concept of, 75-76, 537-38n; and guerrilla tactic, 55; vs. guerrilla strategy, 47-48, 114-15; method of, 38, 195, 296, 439, 509, 511; strategy of, 37, 195-96, 220-21; and struggle against fascism, 188
- Tricontinental Conference, 41, 536n
- Trotsky, Leon, 11, 14-15, 38, 174-75, 384, 391, 519, 594n; on armed struggle, 114-15, 435-37; on army 245-47; and Bolshevik Party, 191, 192, 429-30, 591n; on China, 353-55; on guerrilla warfare, 109-13, 246; and permanent revolution, 563-64n; on terrorism, 142-43; on violence, 436. *See also* Transitional Program
- Túpac Amaru, 341-44, 345
- Tupamaros (Uruguay), 120, 126, 180, 276, 289-90, 301, 551n
- "Two Lines, Two Methods" (Novack), 401
- UCR (Unión Cívica Radical—Radical Party, Argentina), 258, 571n, 574n
- UCR del Pueblo, 290-91, 574n
- Ultraleftism: in Bolivia, 240; and Fourth International, 224, 322, 372; and opportunism, 168; and youth, 10, 11, 93, 137-38
- Unidad Popular (Chile), 219
- Union of the Left (France), 518, 594n
- United Secretariat (Fourth International), 250, 395
- United States, 34, 49, 59, 94, 254, 436; guerrilla warfare in, 125, 132-35
- Uruguay: Frente Amplio (Broad Front), 289, 574n. *See also* PRT (Uruguay); Tupamaros
- USSR, 12, 174-75, 177-78, 409-10
- Vandor, Augusto, 258-59, 261, 571n
- Vanguardia*, 342
- VC (Vanguardia Comunista—Communist Vanguard, Argentina), 262, 266, 571n
- Velasco Alvarado, Juan, 83, 543n
- Venezuela. *See* AD; CP (Venezuela); FLN/FALN
- Verdad, La*, 19, 25, 147, 279, 285
- Vietnam, 177-78, 186, 560n, 561-62n. *See also* Antiwar movement
- Villa, Francisco "Pancho," 121, 551-52n
- Voice of the Federation* (Maritime Federation of the Pacific), 14
- Voorhis Act, 13
- VPR (Vanguardia Popular Revolucionaria—Popular Revolutionary Vanguard, Brazil), 118, 550n
- VR (Vanguardia Revolucionaria—Revolutionary Vanguard, Peru), 482
- Vyborg district (Petrograd, Russia), 187, 562n
- Wallace, George, 143, 144
- Wang Ching-wei, 580n
- War, civilian casualties in, 173-74
- Waters, Mary-Alice, 414, 415, 590n
- Weatherman, 126, 133-35, 552n, 554n, 587n
- Widelin, Victor, 12
- Wilson, Harold, 139, 555n
- Workers' and farmers' government: and Bolivia, 239; in Cuba, 17
- Workers' and Socialist Pole (Argentina), 286, 292, 293, 294, 573n
- Workers' militias, 244-45

- Working class: Fourth International and, in Latin America, 220-21; in Latin America, 467-69, 475; and reformism, 21-22
- World Outlook* (later *Intercontinental Press*), 18, 19, 156
- "World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International, The," 28-29
- World revolution: and classical norm, 59, 62; three sectors of, 540-41n
- World War II: and Fourth International, 12; and Stalinism, 410
- Wright, John G., 354
- YSA (Young Socialist Alliance, U.S.), 133, 553n
- YS/LJS (Young Socialists/Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes, Canada), 376, 584n
- Youth radicalization: and Cuban revolution, 93-94; and Fourth International, 48-49, 62, 98, 211; Fourth International discussion on (1969), 74-76, 511-12; and Guevarism, 70; and ultraleftism, 10, 11, 93, 137-38
- Yugoslavia, 175, 410-11, 588n
- Zapata, Emiliano, 121, 551n





The Leninist Strategy of Party Building

The victory of the Cuban revolution in 1959 inspired a generation of young rebels throughout Latin America. Many sought to follow the example of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara by taking up guerrilla warfare—rural or urban—aimed at toppling dictatorial regimes. Joseph Hansen, writing as a Marxist and a longtime professional revolutionist, examines guerrilla war—its potential value as a tactic when linked to Marxist leadership of mass struggles, but its failure as a general strategy. Hansen also discusses the state of the revolutionary movement in Latin America and traces the theoretical and practical grounds for opposing individual terrorism and minority violence. In a series of polemical essays he outlines a strategy for the building of powerful Marxist parties of the type pioneered by Lenin in the Russian revolution.

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Joseph Hansen joined the American Socialist Workers Party in 1934. He served as secretary to the exiled revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky in Mexico, 1937-40. He was a central leader of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, and editor of the international weekly news magazine *Intercontinental Press* from 1963 until his death in 1979.

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